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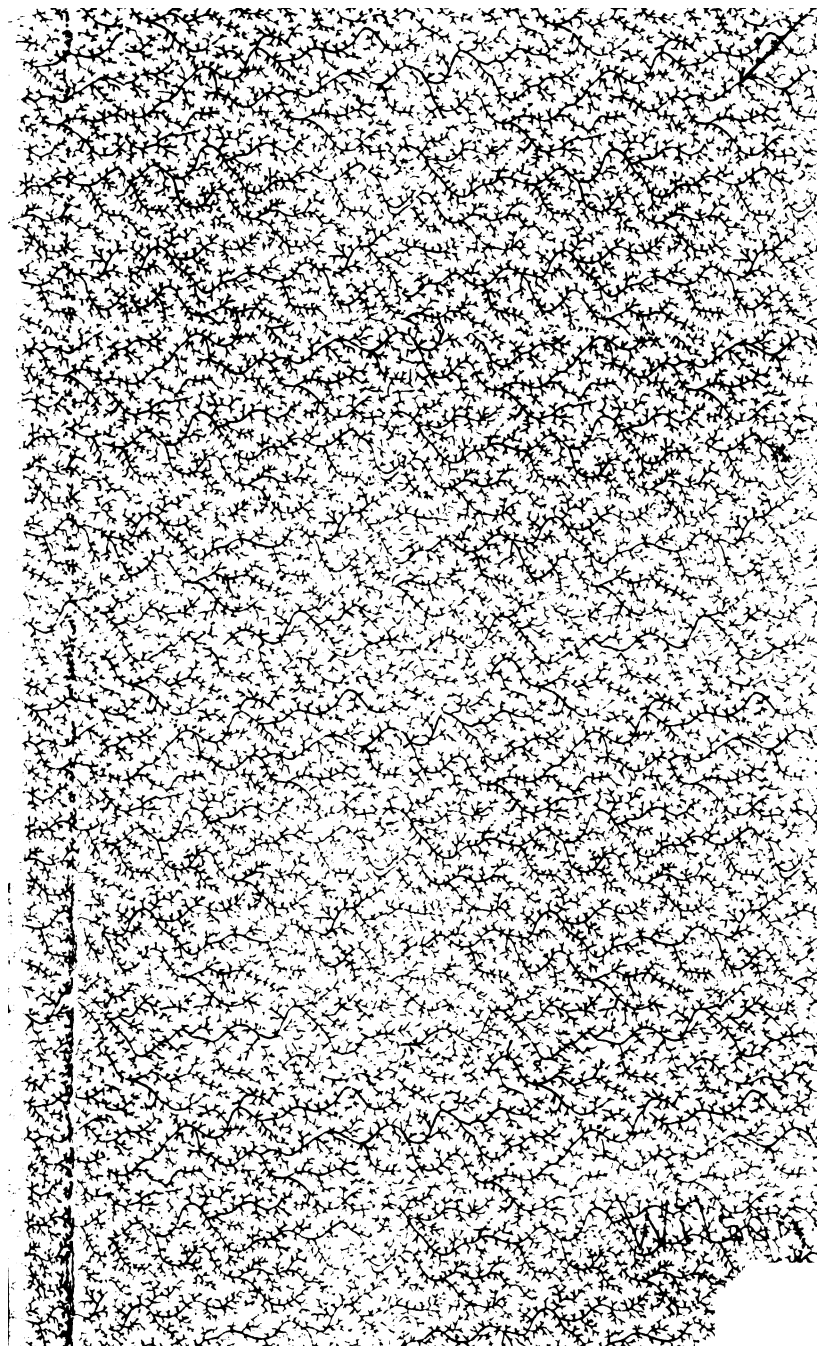
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THE
LISTENER.

BY CAROLINE (FRY) Wilson.
AUTHOR OF 'THE ASSISTANT OF EDUCATION,' &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK

PUBLISHED

BY
J. B. LIPPINCOTT

FIFTH EDITION.

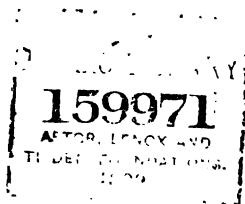
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JOHN W. LATIMER
CLERK
VOLUME

STEREOTYPED BY L. JOHNSON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE English editions of this popular work have been received with much favour, and reviewed in the most respectable journals in the highest terms of commendation. The London Christian Observer says, that “the *Listener* listens to excellent purpose, and her remarks on what she hears well deserve to be carefully weighed. She is domesticated in families; she is a Rambler, a Spectator, and a Tatler, and, we may add, a Christian Observer: and few of us are so wise or so good that we may not be improved by her observations on life and manners, and on those minor morals of social intercourse, as well as those higher points of duty, and that devout regulation of the heart, to which she aspires to conduct those who listen to her honest and salutary advice. Her incidents and remarks, we ought to add, are given in a lively and interesting style; and her monitions are likely to be the more kindly received, as she is always cheerful and good-humoured. We wish her, by the blessing of God, every success in her pious and benevolent undertaking; and, above all, that best reward of turning many to righteousness; not only correcting their general habits, and purifying and sweetening hu-

man intercourse, but leading them in those blessed paths which conduct to everlasting life."

The present volumes have been revised and prepared for the press with much care. Many important alterations and additions have been made to render the whole more instructive and acceptable to the American reader. No material changes have been made in the sentiments expressed by the author; in some instances in which they were considered as inconsistent with the circumstances of society in our country, notes have been added; but it is believed that not a sentence has been omitted, or an alteration made, that will, in the least degree diminish the interest of a single story; and although these volumes contain nearly the same quantity of matter, they are published at less than one half the cost of the English editions.

JOHN
WILEY & SONS

PREFACE.

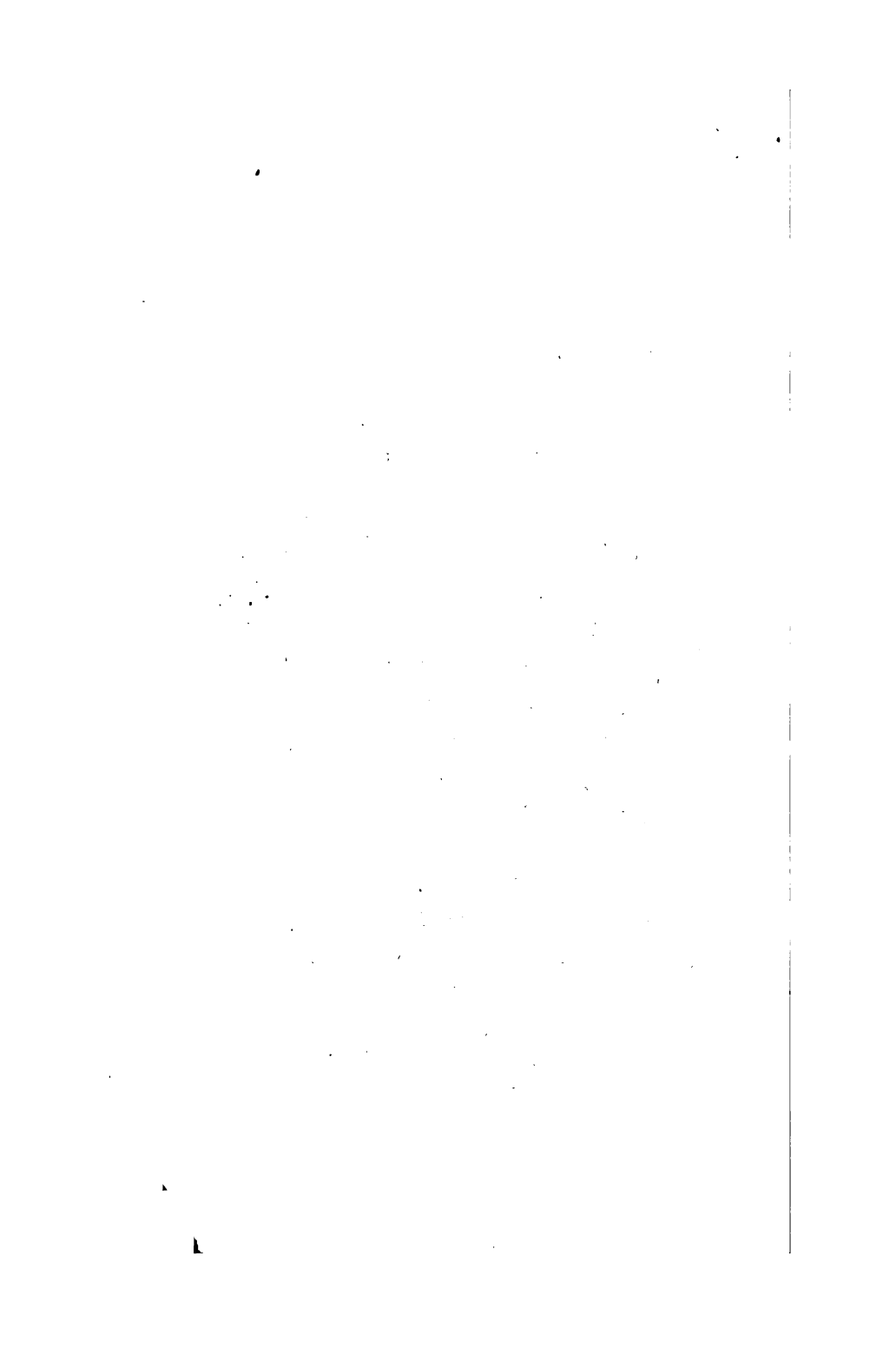
THE office of Listener is not one of very honourable note, especially when determined to tell what she hears: but to deprecate the wrath of my readers against so treacherous an intermeddler with their studies and their amusements, I entreat them to consider that good may be wrought of that with which we usually work evil. If I have the misfortune to have no business of my own, and a particular talent for observing other people's—if my sight is so keen, and my hearing so acute, as to perceive what is passing where I am not present, to see through the roof, and to hear through the walls; what can I do but endeavour to make the best use of so dangerous an endowment, and employ it for the benefit of others? I whisper no idle tale in the gossip's ear—I write no satires upon innocent mistakes; no dry lectures upon well-known evils; but I bear about with me as it were a reflecting glass, which I present to the actors in the scenes

before me, that seeing in it what it is, they may haply discover what might be better. I may sometimes listen, and sometimes dream, and sometimes be forced to perform my task without the benefit of either; but, however it be, I hope my readers will accept and consider my well-intended essays, without being too curious to know how I came by my information, granting me always the privilege of overhearing whatever I think proper.

THEY WERE
GIVEN
TO ASH

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THE LISTENER.

MUSIC.

..... Music often has a charm,
To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.

It was one of those still Autumn nights when the silence of nature bears rather the character of death than of repose—when the ear listening in vain for so much as the falling of a withered leaf, a momentary sensation steals upon the mind that we only are remaining in existence, while all is extinct besides. There was not so much as a ripple to break the moonbeam that was sleeping on the water, a still, pale streak of unvarying brightness. A few light sails of some far-distant vessels hung motionless upon the surface, courting the breeze in vain: but most, in despair of further progress, had dropped the anchor and betaken themselves to the hold, whence a gleam of light now and then glanced upon the water to give the only token of existence. The moon hung in solitary splendour midway in the heavens, and the outline of every object was as distinctly traced as in the full light of day; seeming to gain magnitude and sublimity by the loss of colouring. The cliff appeared to have grown to an immeasurable height, the woods to impenetrable thickness. There was not to be seen in all the heavens a cloud, nor on all the earth

a vapour. Thoughts of lightness and folly can find no welcome in the mind at such an hour as this. That Being with whom we seem to be left alone in the universe, becomes more sensibly the guardian of our path. When removed from all other observation, we grow more conscious of His presence; and the sensation is powerful, though mistaken, that persuades us He can more distinctly mark our feelings in the solitude of night than amid the noise and bustle of the day.

It was so I felt and so I thought, as I walked between the huge dark cliff, and the far-receded waters, listening in vain for any sound that might break on the solemn stillness of the evening. I was now drawing near to the habitations of men; that, stretching from the town, spread themselves at unequal distances along the cliff; rare at first, but increasing in thickness as they drew nearer to the centre from which they emanated. Here too all was silent. Small store of fire and candles had led the peasant early to his rest. The cottage door was closed. The honest were wrapt in wholesomeslumber, and the nightly depredator had not yet come forth on his errand of mischief. I paused a moment to consider the mercy of Him who watches over the unguarded pillow of the one, and forbears the punishment due to the deeds of the other; when a sound, as of distant music, came upon my ear. Walking a little forward, I perceived that it proceeded from a house, yet at some distance, that stood between me and the town. The notes, as far as I could distinguish them, were soft and plaintive; and in the silence of such a night, there seemed to me something in them most celestial. My feelings at that moment told me music was the gift of heaven, and therefore must have been given for our good; and rapidly my

mind ran over the various uses that have been made of it.

In every age and every country, music has been made the emblem of whatever is most lovely and enchanting; and whether the tales that are told us of its influence be truth or fiction, they equally prove the general perception of its power over the feelings and affections of humanity. From the coarse whistle of the ploughboy riding homeward on the fore-horse of his team, to the loud peal of the organ amid the chorus of some hundred voices; music seems to be the most natural language of the happy; the spontaneous solace of the sad. With every idea of things beautiful, pure, and delightful music has been associated: but we never mix it with the images of things base, vicious, and disgraceful. No heathen savage ever pictured to himself a future heaven, but he placed music among the first of its delights; and in those bright prospects of eternal bliss, so often opened to us in the Holy Scriptures, music is always made a part, real or emblematical, of our promised enjoyment.

A power so universal in its influence on our feelings, so naturally combined with whatever is good and fair, and honoured with so much notice in the commands and promises of God, must surely be a gift from heaven, for the use of which we are responsible. Given, as we may suppose it, to our first parents in Paradise, it was there the language of gratitude and joy. The first use of music upon earth, perhaps, was to sound forth the praises of the Creator; and certainly it is the only one of our talents, of the continuance and purpose of which hereafter, any mention has been made. Surely, then, it is a gift too sacred to be used as an instrument of folly and impiety. It is not my purpose here to dis-

close the worst uses to which it has been perverted ; may my readers long and ever continue strangers to them.

My loitering steps now brought me near to the window whence the delightful sounds had issued. I heard them still, and could distinguish voices mingled in natural and simple harmony. Imagination supplying what I did not hear, I fancied it the language of piety going forth from glad and grateful hearts, and stealing through the silence of the night to find gracious acceptance at the throne of mercy : and now my propensity to know more than was intended for my observation became strong within me. Ascending a small elevation directly opposite to the inviting window, I set myself to see what might be passing within.

The room was drest with flowers, and gaily lighted, shining with many a fair and happy countenance. There was not a brow amongst them that seemed to bear the weight of twenty years ; and some not half that number. The little group were variously occupied. Some were examining the wild flowers or turning over the shells and pebbles that had been gathered in their morning walk ; others were spreading forth prints and drawings for the amusement of their friends. One was placed at the piano, while another tuned the harp, and the leaves of the music-book were rapidly turned over in search of the selected song.

My active fancy now found ample business. There was so much innocence in the employments, and so much pleasure in the countenances of the young assembly, that all seemed in unison with my previous feelings. I imagined it some happy birthday night, which the inmates of the mansion had assembled their friends to celebrate. I looked on each

countenance separately, and saw not on one a frown of ill-humour or a shade of sorrow. Here then at least, I whispered to myself, is the use of music not perverted. Some child beloved has completed another of her early years, and the hearts of those who love her are glad and grateful.

Strains of moral feeling, perhaps of cheerful piety, are going forth from hearts as yet untainted with the follies and the fashions of the world ; from lips that no unholy jest—no thoughtless impiety, as yet has stained. The music began ; the air was plaintive. If it had not the sublimity of our best sacred music, it was feeling, chaste, and beautiful. I descended quickly from the mound, and placed myself near enough to the window indistinctly to catch the words. But my dreams of grateful devotion and moral purity, how were they dissipated, when the first words of a French song I distinguished were an impassioned address to the heathen god of love. And going on with a great deal about the Fatal Sisters, and other objects of a pagan's worship ! My pleasure was passed. But curiosity retained me on the spot, and I waited patiently another and another song. The second was Italian : the sweetest language of music, and the most perverted. The best I could hope here, was that performers and audience were alike ignorant of the nonsense, not to say indelicacy, of the words they were singing. At last I distinguished the accents of our native tongue, and something of a better hope revived ; for now the young performers, at least must know the meaning of their words. I heard the name of God—the Christian's God ! and listened with redoubled earnestness : though, in truth, there seemed something of profanation in the mixture ; but, alas ! it was more in accordance than I thought. That sacred

name was used, but as an expression of earnestness, on subjects with which the thought of Him could not possibly combine. How I wished I were at that moment where I could have seen whether a blush did not suffuse the cheeks of the singer, as she uttered a name she could not be accustomed to profane ! Or can it be, that the lips of innocence may sing without thought, or feeling, words they dare not speak—sentiments they would blush to feel—breathe out a mockery of prayer under cover of a foreign language, and make sport of names, at the mention of which, angels in heaven bow their heads in reverence ?

The best that can be said is, that they think no wrong ; and, in the enjoyment of the music, give no heed to the meaning of the words : but that is not the less a danger, to which we are insensible ; and custom has gone far indeed to do its work of mischief, if words of folly and impiety *can* pass our lips without exciting our attention. Again my mind recurred to what music might be—to what it ought to be. Its powerful influence on our hearts—its fitness to excite and to express the best and finest feelings of our nature. Above all, its peculiar suitability to speak the feelings of a grateful heart, at peace with God and with itself. I felt disappointed and grieved and listened no more that night.

NOTE.—Christian parents cannot consider the influence which songs and music have on the present feelings and the future character of their children, or they surely would not suffer one of the best of heaven's gifts to be so strangely perverted. The sentiment of these songs, so soon committed to memory and associated with some pleasing tune, so strongly impressed upon the mind, will, in all probability, go with them through life, and be remembered long after other subjects shall have been forgotten. In our country we are beginning, in some small degree, to feel the importance of

this subject: and many of the most popular, chaste, and pleasing airs and melodies, have been adapted to songs of a moral and instructive, if not of a decidedly religious character.

We are indebted to music for many of the purest and most refined pleasures we enjoy. It may inspire with feelings of devotion; raise the thoughts above the trifles and tumults of this lower world, soothe our cares, and make us forget our sorrows. It may awaken sentiments of honour and glory; or fill the soul with enthusiasm and madness. That wise man understood human nature well, who said, "Let me only make the songs for the people and I care but little who shall make their laws." Who is ignorant of the influence of the *Marsail's Hymn* over the armies of France; or the charm of the Highlander's song; or the wild music of the mountains to the dwellers of the Alps?

When the captive Israelites sat by the rivers of Babylon, and wept, when they remembered Zion: and hung their harps upon the willows; they could endure any suffering; submit to the most degrading slavery; but they could not sing the *Lord's song in a strange land*.

AMERICAN EDITOR.

T I M E.

I saw the leaves gliding down a brook—
Swift the brook ran, and bright the sun burn'd—
The sere and the verdant, the same course they took;
And sped gaily and fast—but they never return'd.
And I thought how the years of a man pass away,
Threescore and ten—and then where are they!

H. NEALE.

“THREESCORE years and ten,” thought I to myself, as I walked, one rainy morning, as a sailor walks the quarter-deck, up and down a short alcove, extending before the windows of a modern house. It was one of those days in June in which our summer hopes take umbrage at what we call unseasonable weather, though no season was ever known to pass without them. Unlike the rapid and delightful showers of warmer days, suddenly succeeding to the sunshine, when the parched vegetables and arid earth seize with avidity and imbibe the moisture ere it becomes unpleasant to our feelings, there had fallen a drizzling rain throughout the night: the saturated soil returned to the atmosphere the humidity it could no longer absorb, and there it hung in chilling thickness between rain and fog. The birds did not sing; and the flowers did not open; for the cold drop was on their cheek, and no sunbeam was there to expand them. Nature itself wore the garb of sadness; and man's too dependent spirits were ready to assume it:—those at least that were not so happy as to find means of forgetting it. Such was the case with my unfortunate self.

I had descended to the breakfast-room at the usual hour, but no one appeared—I looked for a book, but found none but an almanac. The books were kept in the library, beyond all dispute their proper place, had I not been in a humour to think otherwise. The house was too hot, and the external air was too cold; and I was fain to betake myself to that last resource of the absolutely idle, a mechanical movement of the body up and down a given space. And from the alcove where I walked, I heard the ticking of the timepiece: and as I passed the window I saw the hands advance; every time I had returned they had gone a little further. “Threescore years and ten,” said I to myself, “and a third or fourth of it is nature’s claim for indispensable repose; and many a day consumed on the bed of sickness; and many a year by the infirmities of age; and some part of all necessarily sacrificed to the recruiting of the health by exercise. And what do we with the rest? Nothing answered me but the ticking of the clock, of which the hands were traversing between eight and nine. They had nearly met at the latter hour when the party began to assemble within: and each one commenced, for aught I could discover, the functions of the day: for neither their appearance nor their remarks gave any intimation that they had been previously employed. One, indeed, declared the weather made her so idle she had scarcely found strength to dress herself: another confessed he had passed an additional hour in bed, because the day promised him so little to do up. One by one, as they dropped in, the seats at the breakfast-table were filled; and as a single newspaper was all the apparent means of mental occupation, I anticipated some interesting conversation.

I waited and I watched. One ran the point of

his fork into the tablecloth; another balanced her spoon on the teacup; a third told backwards and forwards the rings on her finger, as duly as a friar tells his beads. As such actions are the symptoms sometimes of mental occupation, I began to anticipate the brilliant results of so much thinking. I cried hem! in hopes to rouse them to expression, and not quite unsuccessfully: for one remarked it was a wretched day: another wished it was fine; and a third hoped it shortly would be so. Meantime the index of the clock went round: it was gaining close upon ten before all had withdrawn from the table. My eye followed one to the window-place, where, with her back to the wall, and her eyes fixed without, she passed a full half hour in gazing at the prospect, or wishing, perhaps, the mist did not prevent her seeing it. A very young lady was so busy in pulling the dead leaves from a geranium, and crumbling them in her fingers, I could not doubt but some important purpose was in the task. A third resumed the newspaper he had read for a whole hour before, and betook himself at last to the advertisements. A fourth repaired to the alcove—gathered some flowers, picked them to pieces, threw them away again, and returned. “Cease thy prating, thou never resting timepiece,” said I to myself, “for no one heeds thy tale. What is it to us that each one of thy tickings cuts a link from our brief chain of life? Time was the gift of Heaven, but man has no use for it.”

I had scarcely thought out the melancholy reflection, when a young lady entered with an elegant work-box, red without and blue within, and filled with manifold conveniences for the pursuance of her art. Glad was I most truly at the sight. By the use of the needle the naked may be clothed; inge-

nity may economize her means, and have more to spare for those that need it: invention may multiply the ways of honest subsistence, and direct the ignorant to the use of them. Most glad was I, therefore, that the signal of industry drew more than one wanderer to the same pursuit; though not till much time had been consumed in going in and out, and up and down, in search of the materials. All was found at last: the party worked, and I, as usual, listened. "I think this trimming," said one, "will repay me for my trouble, though it has cost me three months' work already, and it will be three months more before it is finished." "Indeed," rejoined her friend, "I wish I were half as industrious: but I have been working six weeks at this handkerchief, and have not found time to finish it: now the fashion is passed, and I shall not go on." "How beautifully you are weaving that necklace; is it not very tedious?" "Yes, almost endless; but I delight in the work, otherwise I should not do it; for the beads cost almost as much as I could buy it for."—"I should like to begin one this morning," interposed a fourth, "but the milliner has sent home my bonnet so ill-trimmed, it will take me all the day to alter it. The bow is on the wrong side, and the trimming at the edge is too broad. It is very tiresome to spend all one's life in altering things we pay so much for."—"I wish," said a little girl at the end of the table, "that I might work some trimmings for my frock, but I am obliged to do this plain work first. The poor lame girl in the village, who is almost starving, would do it for me for a shilling,* but I must save my allowance this week to buy a French trinket I have taken a fancy to."

* 22 cents.

"Poor thing! she is much to be pitied," said the lady of the trimming. "If I had time, I would make her some clothes."

And so they worked, and so they talked, till I and the timepiece had counted many an hour which they took no account of; when one of them yawned and said, "How tedious are these wet days; it is really impossible to spin out one's time without a walk."

"I am surprised you find it so," rejoined the lady of the beads, "I can rarely take time for walking; though keeping the house makes me miserably languid." And so the morning passed. It was nearly two o'clock, and the company dispersed to their apartments. I pretend not to know what they did there; but each one returned between three and four, in an altered dress. And then half an hour elapsed, in which, as I understood from their impatience, they were waiting for dinner, each in turn complaining of the waste of time occasioned by its delay; and the little use it would be to go about any thing when it was so near. And as soon as dinner was over, they began to wait for tea, with exactly the same complainings. And the tea came—and, cheered by the vivifying draught, one did repair to the instrument and begin a tune,—one did take up a pencil and prepare to draw,—and one almost opened a book. But, alas! the shades of night were growing fast: ten minutes had scarcely elapsed before each one resigned her occupation with a murmur at the darkness of the weather; and though some persons suggested that there were such things as lamps and candles, it was agreed to be a pity to have lights so early in the midst of summer; and so another half hour escaped.

The lights when they came would have failed to

relumine an expectation in my bosom, had not their beams disclosed the forms of various books which one and another had brought in for the evening's amusement. Again I watched, and again I listened. "I wish I had something to do, mamma," said the little girl. "Why do you not take a book and read?" rejoined her mother. "My books are all up stairs," she replied; "and so near bedtime, it is not worth while to bring them down."—"This is the best novel I ever read," said a lady, something older, turning the leaves meantime so very fast, that those who are not used to this method of reading, might suppose she found nothing in it worthy of attention. "I dare say it is," said another, whose eyes had been fixed for half an hour on the same page of Wordsworth's poems; "but I have no time to read novels." "I wish I had time to read any thing," said a third, whom I had observed already to have been perusing attentively the title page of every book on the table, publisher's name, date, and all: whilst a fourth was too intensely engaged in studying the blue cover of a magazine, to make any remark whatever.

And now I was much amused to perceive with what frequency eyes were turned upon the dial-plate, through all the day so little regarded. Watches were drawn out, compared, and pronounced too slow. With some difficulty one was found that had outrun his fellows, and, determined to be right, gave permission to the company to disperse, little more than twelve hours from the time of their assembling, to recover, as I supposed, during the other twelve, dressing and undressing included, the effect of their mental and bodily exertions. "So," I exclaimed, as soon as I found myself alone, "twelve times

round yonder dial-plate those little hands have stolen, and twelve times more they may now go round unheeded. They who are gone to rest have a day the less to live, and record has been made in Heaven of that day's use. Will He who gave, ask no reckoning for his gifts? The time, the thoughts, the talents; the improvement we might have made, and made not; the good we might have done, and did not; the health, and strength, and intellect, that may not be ours to-morrow, and have not been used to-day: will not conscience whisper of it ere they sleep to night? The days of man were shortened upon earth by reason of the wickedness the Creator saw. Threescore years and ten are now his portion, and often not half the number. They pause not; they loiter not; the hours strike on: and they may even go; for it seems they are all too much.

The young, with minds as yet unstored, full of error, full of ignorance in all that it behoves them most to know, unfit alike as yet for earth or heaven. The old, whose sum of life is almost told, and but a brief space remaining to repair their mistakes, and redeem the time they have lost; the simple and ungifted, who, having from nature but little, need the more assiduity to fulfil their measure of usefulness, and make that little do the most it may; the clever and highly talented, who have an almost appalling account to render for the much received; they all have time to waste. But let them remember time is not their own. Not a moment of it but is the grant of Heaven; and Heaven gives nothing without a purpose and an end. Every hour that is wasted fails of that purpose; and in so far as it is wasted, or ill spent, the gift of Heaven is misused; and the misuse is to be answered for. Methinks I

would be allowed to whisper nightly in the ears of my young friends, as they lie down to rest, "How many minutes have you lost to-day, that might have been employed in your own improvement, in your Maker's service, or for your fellow-creature's good?"

CONVERSATION.

Conversation is the daughter of reasoning, the mother of knowledge, the breath of the soul, the commerce of hearts, the bond of friendship, the nourishment of contentment, and the occupation of men of wit.

"Hold your tongue, Miss Julia ; little girls should be *seen* and *not heard*," said Mrs. B.'s nursery governess to a little sprite of seven years old, who was anxious to take a turn in the chatter of the breakfast-table. For I would not have my readers suppose that a nursery breakfast passes without chatter. I who traverse houses from corner to corner, and listen from behind the doors, know better. From the nursery to the kitchen, from the school-room to the parlour, all is chatter, and one might conclude the power of talking increases in inverse ratio with the information possessed. But let it not therefore be concluded that I am no friend to talking. We Listeners are considerably interested in the furtherance of the custom : and it may even appear, ere the end of my tale, that I have a very different object in view, than that of putting my young friends to silence.

It is objected by some, that young people talk too much, and by others, that they talk too little ; and each remark is just ; for they do both. When young people are alone, freed from the constraints of society and the presence of those who are older or wiser than themselves, their ceaseless volubility, the idleness, uselessness, and folly of their conversation

is all too much : not a pause to reflect upon their words ; not a moment to weigh the sentiments they hear ; not a care for the time they waste, or for the habits of trifling and exaggeration they acquire. But in society, they often talk too little. An unreasonable fear of exposing their sentiments loses to them the best means of ascertaining if they are right. A want of that simplicity of mind, which conscious of no design, does not look to be charged with a wrong one, makes them fear to be thought ostentatious ; while the real difficulty of expressing themselves, from want of being accustomed to it—a difficulty their indolence would rather keep than make an effort to subdue—prevents their joining in conversation on subjects on which they are fully able to speak, and would gain information by doing so. Modesty may lead them to suppose they cannot contribute to the pleasure of the conversation ; and pride prevents their speaking, lest they should, perhaps, expose their ignorance.

I have wondered often how all this befalls ; but now methinks I have stolen a key that may unlock the mystery. Little Julia was to be seen, and not heard ; that is to say, she was to ask no questions, when her infant mind was struggling to enlarge itself by increase of knowledge : she was to express no feeling that moved her little bosom, or thought that awakened in her dormant intellect. But Julia was to listen, I suppose ; and much may be learnt by silent attention. She listened, and so did I : and we learned a great deal ; for we heard all that the footman had told the cook, and the cook had told the nursery maid ; and we gained an insight into our neighbours' affairs, and heard many wonders, the incredibility of which never failed to secure belief. Whereas what was simply true and certain,

was warmly contested. Added to all this were the schemes of deception and petty artifices that I do not judge it honourable to disclose.

This, then, I thought within myself, is little Julia's first lesson in the art of talking; a lesson she will probably repeat after her own manner, the first time she escapes with her younger sisters to a private corner: and not being allowed to inquire, her mind must work, for work it will, upon the materials it has gathered. I heard her, in truth, not long after, exaggerating, and mimicking, and wondering, and disputing, as fast as her little tongue could move, to evince its delight at the resumption of its power.

The powers of speech are among the most important committed to our charge; and as capable as any other of a right or a wrong cultivation: there is this only difference, that while other powers lie dormant from neglect, these will be in action, whether cultivated or not, and if we do not direct them to the right, will most certainly expend themselves on the wrong. If a young person is not allowed, or not encouraged to speak with her parents or equals, she will requite herself by talking to her waiting-maid; and if she be not accustomed in society to converse rationally and sensibly, she will most surely spend the powers given her for better purposes, in idle gossip or mischievous slander.

From the lessons in the nursery, Julia passes to the school-room: she there learns much, and perhaps thinks much, but has little opportunity to communicate. If the discipline be strict, she is desired to hold her tongue, and mind her lessons; if it be indulgent, she may talk, indeed, as fast as it pleases her; she may repeat, with the more exaggeration the better, all the tittle-tattle she has heard elsewhere; what this person says, and that person does;

and the other person wears ; but no one takes any care to lead her to subjects useful and improving, to correct her misconceptions, and false ideas, and rash assertions. And here I entreat my readers to attend ; for if the fault has been hitherto charged to the nurse and the maid, it now becomes their own.

And so it was, that some years after my first acquaintance with Julia in the nursery—it was a cheerless night—the heavens were hung with the thick dark clouds that betoken coming snows : here and there a pallid star peeped forth, perceived but a moment ere it was gone, and returned no more. I watched them long, and they became fewer and fewer ; and one by one I saw the clouds close over them, as time closes over the joys that have passed away. And now the vapours united into one unshadowed and unbroken mass of blackness. The winds just whispered through the leafless trees, a low and melancholy sound, and I began to feel the cold droppings of the fleecy shower of snow. More silent than the thief upon his midnight errand, unheard and unsuspected from within, it stole down upon the hard frozen earth, to prepare for the returning sun far other landscape than that he shone upon before he set. I was some distance yet from home, and liking to observe nature in all her varied aspects, I sought shelter in the porch of a handsome dwelling-house that fronted the path I was treading. There, through an opening in the crimson curtains of an adjoining window, I looked upon a scene strikingly contrasted with that which was without. A blazing fire, recently fed with the dry log, crackled and sparkled on the hearth. The reeking urn, with the tall candles by its side, was hissing on the table. The downy rug and many-coloured

carpet, with the deep crimson of the curtain, gave a glow of warmth to the picture, strikingly opposed to the growing whiteness of the scene without.

A number of young persons were in the room; the plainness of their dress, their easy familiarity, and small numbers, did not indicate a party, and yet there were more than might belong to a single family. This was not hard to understand. And how powerfully came to my mind, at the moment, the boundless munificence of that Being, who has provided enjoyments for every season; comforts for nature's most sad and cheerless hours. What was to them the chilling shower of snow that fell without, or the frost that bound the palsied earth in impenetrable hardness? In the enjoyment of present pleasures, other, but not less, they sighed not at the recollection of the tints of autumn or the summer's sun. And then came into my gladdened mind all the delights of social intercourse; of sentiments sweetly responding to each other; of feelings tenderly participated; of argument without dispute; reproof without unkindness. And I thought, if I might not share it, I might now at least contemplate it: and so I tried to listen to what passed within. To ordinary persons this might have been difficult. But what can professed listeners not hear?

The youthful party, for such it was, had recently met, as it seemed to me, to pass a social evening; all on familiar terms and intimately acquainted: therefore there was neither reserve, nor form to check or damp their pleasures. The tea was making, and as they sipped the fragrant draught, the talk went cheerfully round. It began as usual with the weather. I do not exactly object to this; because something must be said first; and, as the beginning address is a great difficulty to the reserved and modest, it is

very well to have an established form of commencement, fitted for all circumstances. But I did think half an hour something too long for this prelude. And I did think besides, that when one called it miserable weather, and another said it was a wretched day, and a third declared it put her quite out of temper; and a fourth wished she could sleep till it was finer, the speakers either did not well regard the meaning of their words or had formed an extraordinary estimate of misery and wretchedness, as well as of the value of time, and the preservatives of good-humour. And I began to be something impatient when one remarked at some length on the wonderful shortening of the days, which, as it usually occurs in November, I thought scarcely might need a remark, much less an expression of surprise or complaint. The subject next in succession was that of dress. Here, too, the gentle critic must concede something to what makes a necessary part of a woman's business; and so I was very patient for a while. But, indeed, this subject so far outlived its predecessor, the remarks were so useless, the eagerness so disproportioned to the occasion, the importance attached to it so much too great, and the expenditure of thought on it so very obvious, I began to be well nigh weary of my listening, when it diverged a little from dress in the abstract, to dress in the application, and all the dresses of all the ladies in the parish, red, blue, and black, Sunday and workingday, were numbered, described, and discussed.

But wo to him whose discontent would have a shange at any rate, before he knows for what! from the dress we passed to the persons, and from the persons to the affairs, of others. What was before.

but useless, now became mischievous. Words were repeated, tales were told, surmises were whispered, peculiarities were mimicked, falsehoods were circulated, and truths were ridiculed. The only hope that promised some limit to the evil circulated was, that as all talked at once, no one could receive much impression from what another said. But I, the silent Listener, did; for I observed that one in particular was so addicted to exaggeration, that if she told a truth, it became a falsehood on her lips; another was so possessed with the image of self, that even in talking of others, she never failed to push in the *I* and the *me* at every sentence, either by the way of comparison, or simile, or illustration: and another was so envious, at least, if not censorious, that she replied with a *but* to even the least suggestion of merit, or palliation of demerit, in another; in a fourth, I remarked that her opinion changed so rapidly, in one thing only was she decided, that of differing from whoever happened to be heard last. Another was so absolutely certain of every thing, one was almost constrained to believe her an eye-witness of all that had passed in the three kingdoms since she was born, and for twenty years before. But no one more displeased me than a little lady, who could assume every body's countenance, mimic every body's tone of voice, and caricature every body's manners.

Full two good hours more had elapsed before the conversation had progressed through all these shades of subjects, and there came a transition for which I could not well account; it having arisen in a corner whence I could not distinctly hear amid the tumult. But suddenly it seemed to me, from certain words I caught, that my young party were speaking of reli-

gion. I was not long in doubt how the conversation might have passed from things so frivolous to a theme so important; for I soon was doomed to know that the frivolity of talk does not depend upon its subject. These young critics were talking indeed of preachers, and of sermons, and of last Sunday's congregation, and who was there, and who ought to have been there, and was not. And one minister was compared with another, and one extolled, and the other depreciated. And the last sermon at their parish church, which seemed to be tolerably well remembered, was closely criticised. One liked this part, and one did not like that part, and some ridiculed and even mimicked the peculiarities in the expression and manner of the preacher. And then the mistakes and inconsistencies of all the religious people in their circle of acquaintance were hinted and wondered at, and apparently very conscientiously bewailed.

It was a point as difficult, indeed, as it seemed to be important, to determine, amid conflicting opinions, who amongst them were to be considered religious and who were not. And so went on—but I forbore to listen. The night's increasing chillness warned me thence; and as I betook myself to my solitary home, I tried in vain to recall, of all I had heard, one single expression of feeling, one thought that bespoke reflection, one breathing of piety, cultivation, or good sense. Yet I had reason to believe that some of the young persons possessed all these: they had been carefully, politely, and religiously educated; they knew much, and probably felt much. Why, then, was it so? From habit simply—habit, unresisted by others when they were younger; and now unresisted by themselves; growing every year

more inveterate, shortly to become too difficult to conquer. Dispersed in society where good sense, piety, and intellect, give the tone to the discourse, these young people would be found silent, reserved, and embarrassed, wishing in vain they had words in which to clothe their thoughts, or courage to express their feelings, and ask an explanation of their doubts. And their minds must have more than the ordinary power of resistance, if they come not eventually to prefer the company of the trifling, the frivolous, and the senseless.

Meantime the Oracle of Wisdom has declared, "The thought of foolishness is sin." What sin, then, in its habitual and confirmed expression, become by habit the language of our lives! What sin in the perversion of that power whose use is unlimited in good—in telling forth the praises of God—in speaking comfort to the suffering; in giving information to those that know not; in adding the highest zest to intellectual pleasures; the most exquisite enjoyment to social intercourse! Rational conversation is the means above all others calculated to correct our mental errors; to shame our selfish passions; to correct the false estimate we form of ourselves, and induce a liberal and benevolent consideration of the feelings of others. It is the genial fire applied from time to time to save the heart from the icy coldness that steals upon it amidst the selfish occupations of the world. It is the overflow of feelings too big for the bosom to hold and be at peace. It is the gentle consolation that neither age, nor sorrow, nor infirmity, forbids to us; the draught oblivious, in which suffering the most poignant can for awhile forget itself: the offspring of confidence and love, better thriving on the hearth of domestic

privacy, than in the sullen splendours of dissipation.

And is it even so, that of a gift like this, we make an instrument of folly—to dissipate every serious thought—to put to the blush every right feeling—to disseminate falsehood and mischief—wound others, and corrupt ourselves?

GOOD OLD MARY.

She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding and no wit,
Receives no praise ; but though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent, she renders much—
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true.

COWPER.

ALL who enter on the world are in pursuit of happiness. Each one questions of another where it is or fancies he perceives it from afar ; but very few confess that they have found it. The young, starting into life with sanguine hopes and spirits gay, expect it everywhere: the more experienced, having sought it long and found it not, decide that it is nowhere. The moralist tells us there is no such thing ; and the historian almost proves it by the miseries he details. Poverty says, "It is not with me ;" and Wealth says, "Not with me." Splendour dashes by the cottage door, heaves the rich jewel on her bosom with a sigh, and says that the dwellers there are happier than she is. Penury looks out upon her as she passes, loathes, her own portion, and silently envies what she must not share. Ignorance, with dazzled and misjudging eye, admires the learned, and esteems them happy. Learning decides that "ignorance is bliss," and bewails the enlargement of capacity it cannot find enough to fill. Wherever we ask, the answer is still, "Seek further." Is it so, then, that there is no happiness on earth ? Or if it does exist, is it a thing of circum-

stance, confined to certain states, dependent on rank and station ; here to-day and gone to-morrow : in miserable dependence on the casualties of life ? We are often asked the question by those by whom the world is yet untried, who, even in the spring-time of their mirth, are used to hear the complaints of all around them ; and well may wonder what they mean. We effect not to answer questions which never yet were answered ; but we can tell a story of something that our ear has heard, and our eye has seen, and that many besides can testify to be the truth. And well may we, who so often listen to what we like not, be allowed for once to tell a pleasant tale.

Distant something more than a mile from the village of Desford, in Leicestershire, at the lower extremity of a steep and rugged lane, was seen an obscure and melancholy hovel. The door stood not wide to invite observation ; the cheerful fire gleamed not through the casement to excite attention from the passenger. The low roof and outer wall were but just perceived among the branches of the hedge-row, uncultured and untrimmed, that ran between it and the road. As if there were nothing there that any one might seek ; no way of access presented itself ; and the step of curiosity that would persist in finding entrance, must pass over mud and briers to obtain it. Having reached the door with difficulty, a sight presented itself such as the eye of delicacy is not used to look upon. It was not the gay contentedness of peasant life, that poets tell of, and prosperity sometimes stoops to envy. It was not the labourer resting from his toil, the ruddy child exulting in its hard, scant meal, the housewife singing blithely at her wheel, the repose of health and fearlessness ; pictures that so often persuade us happiness has her dwelling in the cabins of the poor.

The room was dark and dirty: there was nothing on the walls but the bare beams, too ill joined to exclude the weather, with crevices in vain attempted to be stopped by torn and moulded paper. A few broken utensils hung about the room: a table and some broken chairs were all the furniture, except what seemed intended for a bed, yet promised little repose. The close and smoky atmosphere of the apartment, gave to it the last colouring of discomfort and disease. Within there sat a figure such as the pencil well might choose for the portrait of wretchedness. Quite gray, and very old, and scarcely clothed, a woman was seen sitting by the fire-place, seemingly unconscious of all that passed around her. Her features were remarkably large, and in expression harsh: her white hair turned back from the forehead, hung uncombed upon her shoulders; her withered arm, stretched without emotion on her knee, in form and colouring seemed nothing that had lived—her eye was fixed on the wall before her—an expression of suffering, and a faint movement of the lip, alone giving token of existence.

Placed with her back towards the door, she perceived not the intrusion, and while I paused to listen and to gaze, I might have determined that here at least was a spot where happiness could not dwell; one being, at least, to whom enjoyment upon earth must be forbidden by external circumstance—with whom to live was of necessity to be wretched. Well might the Listener in such a scene as this be startled by expressions of delight, strangely contrasted with the murmurs we are used to hear amidst the world's abundance. But it was even so. From the pale, shriveled lips of this poor woman, we heard a whispering expression of enjoyment, scarcely articulate, yet not so low but that we could distinguish the words "Delightful," "Happy."

As we advanced with the hesitation of disgust into the unsightly hovel, the old woman looked at us with kindness, but without emotion, bade us be seated, and, till questioned, showed very little inclination to speak. Being asked how she did? she at first replied, "Very ill;" then hastily added, "My body is ill—but I am well, very well." And then she laid her head upon a cold, black stone, projecting from the wall beside the fire-place, as if unable to support it longer. We remarked that it was bad weather. "Yes," she answered—then hastily correcting herself—"No, not bad—it is God Almighty's weather, and cannot be bad." "Are you in pain?" we asked—a question scarcely necessary, so plainly did her movements betray it. "Yes, always in pain—but not such pain as my Saviour suffered for me; his pain was far worse than mine—mine is nothing to it." Some remark being made on the wretchedness of her dwelling, her stern features almost relaxed into a smile, and she said she did not think it so; and wished us all as happy as herself.

As she showed little disposition to talk, and never made any remark till asked for it, and then in words as few and simple as might express her meaning, it was slowly and by repeated questions that we could draw from her a simple tale. Being asked if that was all the bed she had on which to sleep, she said she seldom slept, and it was now a long time since she had been able to undress herself; but it was on that straw she passed the night. We asked her if the night seemed not very long? "No—not long," she answered—"never long—I think of God all night; and, when the cock crows, am surprised that the morning has come so soon." "And the days—you sit here all day, in pain and

unable to move—are the days not long?"—"How can they be long? Is not He with me? Is it not all up—up?" an expression she frequently made use of to describe the joyful elevation of her mind. On saying she passed much time in prayer, she was asked what she prayed for? To this she always answered, "Oh! to go, you know—to go—when He pleases: not till He pleases." To express the facility she found in prayer, she once said, it seemed as if her prayers were all laid out ready for her in her bed. But time would fail us to repeat the words, brief as they were, in which this aged saint expressed her gratitude to the Saviour who died for her: her enjoyment of the God who abode with her; her expectations of the heaven to which she was hastening, and perfect contentedness with her earthly portion. It proved, on inquiry, to be worse than it appeared. The outline of her history, as gathered at different times from her own lips, was this:—

Her husband's name was Peg; her own Mary: she had long been remembered in the village, as living in extreme poverty, and going about to beg bacon at Christmas-time. Her youth had been passed in services of various kinds; and though she did not know her age, it appeared, from public events which she remembered to have passed when she was a girl, that she could not be less than eighty. Later in life she had kept sheep upon the forest hills, and, in the simplicity of her heart, would speak of her days of prosperity when she had two sheep of her own. She could not read, but from attending divine service had become familiar with the language of Scripture. We know nothing of her previous character: that of her husband and family was very bad: but we are not informed that hers was so. The first earnest religious feeling she

related of herself, was felt when walking alone in the fields; she bethought herself of her hard fate—a youth of toil, an old age of want and misery—and if she must go to hell at last, how dreadful was her portion! Struck with the appalling thought, she knelt down beneath the hedge to pray—the first time, perhaps, that heartfelt and earnest prayer had gone up to heaven from her lips.

Not very long after this, as we understood, the old woman was taken ill, and unable to move from the straw, at that time her only bed, in a loft over the apartment we have described; where little sheltered by the broken roof, and less by the rags that scarcely covered her, she lay exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, without money to support, or a friend to comfort her. It was in this situation that her mind, dwelling probably on the things that in health passed by her unregarded, received the strong and lasting impression of a vision she thought she beheld, probably in a dream; though she herself believed that she was walking. In idea she saw the broad road and the narrow as described in Scripture. In the broad road, to use her own expressions, there were many walking; it was smooth and pleasant, and they got on fast; but the end of it was dark. On the narrow road she herself was treading, and some few others; but the way was rugged: some turned back, and others sat down unable to proceed. She herself advanced till she reached a place more beautiful, she said, than any thing to which she could compare it. When asked what it was like, she could not say, but that it was very bright, and that there were many sitting there. Being questioned who these were, she said they were like men and women, but larger and far more beautiful, and all drest in “glitterings;” such was her

expression—and one was more beautiful than the rest, whom she knew to be the Saviour, because of his readiness and kindness in receiving her. But the most pleasing impression seemed to be left by the hallelujahs this company were singing. She was told by Him she knew to be the Saviour, that she must go back for a little time, and then should come again to dwell with them for ever.

Thus ended her vision, but not so the impression it made. The recollection of the scene she had witnessed, and of the bliss that had been promised her, seemed to lead her to the source of all her happiness. Turning her eye from earth to heaven, and fixing all her thoughts on that eternity to which she was hastening, it left her, not what she before had been, wretched on earth, and unmindful of any thing beyond: but with a heart deeply impressed with the love and mercy of God; fully and undoubtingly relying on her Saviour's promise, and proving the reality of those feelings by earnest devotion, and most cheerful acquiescence in her Maker's will. It was not the fervour of a first impression—the enthusiasm of an excited imagination. She survived six or seven years, but time made no change in her feelings. She passed those years in the extreme of poverty, dependent on the alms of some few persons who knew and visited her: she passed them in pain and helplessness; mocked and ill-treated by her husband and her sons, and insulted often by her unfeeling neighbours, who came to laugh at her devotion and ridicule her hopes.

For these, as well as for some who visited her for kinder purposes, she had but one answer—she wished them all like her; prayed that they might only be as happy as herself. When told, what she had seen was a mere dream and a delusion, she said it

did not signify to tell her that—she had seen it, and it was the recollection of it that made her nights so short and her days so happy: “And what does it signify,” she added, “that they swear at me, and tell me I am a foolish old woman—don’t I know how happy I am?”

During the many years that she survived, the minister of the parish saw her frequently, and found little variation in her feelings, none in her firm adherence to the tale she at first had told; and the persuasion that what she had seen was a blessed reality, sufficient to make her happy in every extreme of earthly wretchedness. And he saw her die as she had lived, in holy, calm, and confident reliance on her Saviour’s promises.

To what I have written, I could find much to add, having notes of all that passed during the protracted years of this devoted woman’s life. But my purpose is not to make a story. I have witnessed only to what I saw, and repeated only what my ear has listened to. And I have repeated it but to prove that the happiness which all men seek, and most complain they find not, has sometimes an abode where we should least expect to find it. This is an extreme case: extreme in mental enjoyment, as in external misery. But it is true. And if it be so, that a being debarred the most common comforts of life; almost of the light and air of heaven, suffering, and incapable even to clothe herself, or cleanse her unsightly dwelling, could yet pass years of so much happiness, that her warmest expression of gratitude to her benefactors was to wish them a portion as happy as her own; what are we to say to those, who, amid the overflow of earthly good, make the wide world resound with their complainings? How are we to understand it, that, while blessings are

showered around us as the summer rain, there is so little real happiness on earth?—Because we seek it not aright—we seek it where it is not, in outward circumstance and external good, and neglect to seek it, where alone it dwells, in the close chambers of the bosom. We would have a happiness in time independent of eternity; we would have it independent of the Being whose it is to give: and so we go forth, each one as best we may, to seek out the rich possession for ourselves. Those who think they are succeeding, will not listen to our tale. But if there be any who, having made a trial of the world, are disposed to disbelieve the existence of what they seek—if there be any among the young, who start at the report, and shrink from the aspect of their already-clouded prospects, we would have them hear a brighter tale. There is happiness upon earth. There is happiness for the poor and for the rich; for the most prosperous and the most desolate. There is happiness, but we will not seek it where alone it can be found.

T R U T H.

So much of the happiness of social life is derived from the use of language, and so profitless would the mere power of language be, but for the truth that dictates it, that the absence of the confidence which is placed in our declarations, may not merely be in the highest degree injurious to the individual, but would tend, if general, to throw back the whole race of mankind into that barbarism from which they have emerged.

DR. BROWN.

WALKING one morning in the garden at an hour, when there is little to listen to, except the small twittering of the wakeful lark, the distant footsteps of the cattle, and the coarse voices of their drivers, preparing to go forth to their labour; I desired at least to hear, what all who will listen may hear, a word of truth from the still voice of nature. There is so striking an affinity between the moral and the natural world, resembling consequences so surely resulting from resembling causes, one might imagine the world of things inanimate had been formed and framed but as a picture to show forth what is passing within us, and warn us of the things that affect our moral welfare; a fable, as it were, of which we are to find the moral, and apply it to ourselves. There is scarcely a moment of our lives in which, if we be pleased to pause and look around, we may not learn a useful lesson from something that is passing among the natural objects that surround us.

The garden that morning was very gayly dressed. The moss-rose drooped its head, overlaiden with

the weight of dew that was upon it, more beautiful in its tears than when opening in full splendour to the mid-day sun. The pale lily, delicate and colourless, seemed in its spotless purity to shun the charms that embellished other flowers. And the pink, and the gay pansy, and numberless others, were there all ranged in correct and beautiful order, unmixed with any noxious or unsightly weed: except that on one single spot I marked the first germ of something that did not seem to be a flower; and yet, having no distinct form, could not well be determined to be a weed. I paused a moment in thought to pull it up; but what harm was there in it? It bore but two small leaves, and why not let it grow? And so it grew—and in a few weeks it spread far and wide its rank, luxuriant branches. The flowers that crept upon the soil were smothered beneath it, while its taller neighbours were encompassed by its leaves. And each morning as I renewed my walk, I marked the growth of the unsightly weed, spreading farther and farther to mar the neatness and beauty of the bed of flowers. Its roots had mingled with the roots of the tender flowers; its branches had interwoven with their branches, and it would now be a task of difficulty to part them without injury.

And on the last morning that I walked there, I bethought myself of what this weed might resemble; that from so small and innocent a beginning, had grown into such speedy and abundant mischief. Alas! there were many things that it resembled, but too closely. Many were the vices that came into my mind as the results of early indulgence. But in as much as this garden had been richly cultivated and fairly kept, and but for the rapid growth of this neglected weed, had seemed almost without a ble-

mish, there was one thing in particular it seemed to me to resemble; for I had known vice to subsist in minds of considerable cultivation, and hide itself under very highly-polished manners; the single blemish of an otherwise fair and spotless character.

As the ground, accursed for our sake, when left unwatched, brings forth the poisonous weed, so the human heart, if unchecked in its propensities, will bring forth evil; but none, perhaps, so spontaneously as falsehood. There seems to be from earliest infancy a disposition to it, and it is generally the first great fault a child becomes guilty of.

Falsehood, in its grosser form, is so palpable a sin, and so revolting, that we need say nothing here to prove it so. The full-grown weed not any one would spare, could they find means to root it out. But the weed was a weed, before it seemed so, and the poison was already in the root. And so are there forms of falsehood that excite no disgust, and create but small alarm, if any, when first detected in the character—nay, are too often fostered and encouraged.

When Anna told a direct falsehood in her infancy, she should have been corrected with seriousness; the guilt of it would then have been made plain to her, and every proper means should have been employed to prevent a recurrence of the fault. But no one gave heed to the slight inaccuracies into which she was betrayed by a lively imagination and a hurried mode of expression; her mistakes excited mirth, and were not unfrequently repeated in her presence as proofs of wit or subjects of amusement. So welcome a lesson was promptly learned, and what was at first carelessness, soon became design. The plain and simple truth gained no attention; a very little

exaggeration would make mirth for herself and her companions. In all this Anna meant no sin; and during her childhood, perhaps, it scarcely seemed to amount to sin, because it deceived no one, and injured no one. But the rank weed grew apace. From exaggerating by design, she grew so accustomed to it, that it became almost impossible to her to speak literally. One hour was, by her reckoning, always three—five hundred stood for twenty; every rood was a mile, and every common accident a marvel, if not an impossibility.

These may seem trifles, but they did not long continue so. The prattle of the child grew into the converse of the woman; and where was then the truth too sacred to be sacrificed to Anna's wit? The words of others distorted, their actions misconstrued, and their affairs misstated, to make them ridiculous and herself amusing. From exaggeration to invention is but a pass imperceptible: no matter who was wronged or who deceived: habit had absorbed the sense of wrong; and a laugh had become the price current for a lie. These lies, perhaps, were not meant to injure; but every falsehood may injure, whatever be intended. Anna, at first, gave pain without knowing it. But she could not stop here. There are occasions in every one's life where a falsehood may seem to serve our present interests—where a falsehood may gratify our resentment, may shield us from disgrace, or secure us a triumph over those who contend with us. Would Anna pause when these occasions came? Would she, who told falsehoods daily without a motive, hesitate when it could serve some important purpose? When passion was excited and interest at stake, would she, for the first time in her life, stop to consider the criminality of saying what was not true? No—Anna

will surely tell at last, if it serves her purpose, the most injurious and deliberate falsehood.

Now, however the world may join in with the laugh, however willingly the idle may listen, and the thoughtless applaud, such a character is not esteemed. The gay and the giddy may seek them when they would be amused, but friendship takes them not to her bosom : feeling holds no communion with them : sorrow asks of them no comfort : wisdom takes with them no counsel : candour, simplicity, and good sense, shrink instinctively from their touch. However brilliant, and however entertaining, however innocent even in intention, the person whose words are habitually not true, is lowered in the scale of moral creatures—their opinions have very little weight ; their testimony is but little regarded, and their sincerity but rarely trusted ; even though they were never yet guilty of a mischievous deception. But we must look higher than this. There is One above us, who Himself is Truth, and to whom all that is not, must be hateful. He has promised to *bring into judgment every idle word*, and has already passed sentence upon the guilt of “whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” Surely they are dangerous weapons these for us to make sport with. With the utmost caution which we may use, we shall not escape the condemnation, should He be extreme to mark our words. There is so much deception in our hearts, that we rarely even know the truth exactly ; and there is so much temptation to disguise, or discolour it, that perhaps scarcely a day goes by us in which we are not betrayed into some evasion. The weed is too surely indigenous to the soil, and every hour that we spare to check its growth, we spare an enemy that will spoil the beauty of our garden. The best, and the sweetest, and the purest,

in moral loveliness, will be attainted by its unhallowed touch.

Early let us go to our garden, and look if the small germ be there; and every morning return to see if it be coming up. And mark well the manner of its growth. It does not come at once, a bold and mischievous falsehood. Being in society, we hear something that hurts or offends us; desiring that another should share our indignation or redress our wrong, we add to it, perhaps, no more but an aggravative tone. It is but wounded feeling, or just abhorrence of sin. True—but it is falsehood. Walking by the way-side, we meet objects of distress; anxious to interest others for their sake, we exaggerate the picture of suffering, or conceal its alleviation. Our motive is but benevolence. True—but it is falsehood. We have been witness to some incident, or listened to some recital: a very little embellishment will make it highly marvellous, and excite interest or afford amusement; no one can be harmed by it. True—but it is still falsehood. Well, the weed is fair and green: shall we let it grow on another day? We have committed some fault—if we confess it, we shame ourselves for ever, and sink in the esteem of those we love. A falsehood for this time will conceal it, and we will do the wrong no more. True—but another sin, and probably a greater, is added to the first, and He who knows all is left out of the account.

Being innocent, it may be we have been wronged, or we have been the unwilling occasion of wrong; by a falsehood, mischief may be prevented: with no other defence in our power, we may surely prevent crime, and secure ourselves from injury. But this is no more than to choose to ourselves the culprit's part, and being innocent, voluntarily to claim

guilt on our behalf. It is better to suffer innocent, than guilty to escape. We are perhaps, brought unawares into a situation in which, if the truth be not denied, we shall seem unkind, ungrateful, insincere. We know that we are not so, though appearances are against us ; falsehood may seem here but the servant of truth—we use it only to prevent mistake. Methinks our fatal weed is growing now apace. That which at first seemed the handmaid of generous feeling, hath passed over to the service of self—not yet, it is true, to serve any evil propensity, or indulge any culpable desire. It seems but a fair background to set off our flowers ; but let it not grow on.

Hard service, truly, has that propensity which once is enlisted to wait on the selfish interest of man. Envy, jealousy, and emulation, anger, resentment, and revenge, ambition, vanity, and pride ; all these make a part of human selfishness, and claim to be served in their turn. The weapon is in a hand well practised to its use. When better feeling predominates, the use of it seems to be for good. But when passion surprises us, can the well-practised hand forbear the ready weapon ? Envy can, by a word of falsehood, bear down its proud superior ; emulation can, by a falsehood, pass over the head of its rival ; revenge can sate itself ; anger can safely spend itself, in falsehood : pride, and vanity, and ambition, may be served by it. And thus we have the weed full grown. We may use it oftener or more seldom, as the temptation arises, or as passion impels ; but that we shall use it when occasion urges, is not doubtful. And who now can tell the deformity of the weed we have spared ? It may misrepresent the most pure intention ; it may blight the fairest character ; it may attain the holiest mind ; bring

ridicule on the most sacred truths ; betray the most generous trust destroy all confidence and honest intercourse in society ; and provoke and insult that High, Holy, and Omniscient Being, whom nothing can deceive, and who will bear with no deception.

Faintly we have sketched the mischiefs, and faintly described the manner of the growth. We have given some examples, but they are a few among a thousand. We warn you of the danger of the first departure from truth ; of the playful brandishing of so dangerous a weapon. Thus much, at least, must be acknowledged—falsehood is sin—sin can never be a trifle or a jest.

F E A R S.

The butler desired me, with a very grave face, not to venture my self in that place after sunset, for that one of the footmen had been almost frightened out of his wits by a spirit that appeared to him in the shape of a black horse without a head—to which he added, that about a month ago, one of the maids coming home late that way with a pail of milk upon her head, heard such a rustling in the bushes that she let it fall.

ADDISON.

It was my misfortune once to visit a family of people, very excellent, and very amiable, and for any thing I desire to say to the contrary, very wise in things of moment. Besides the mother, there were several young people of different ages, reaching from infancy almost to womanhood, all happy, and all obliging—except when they happened to be assailed with what they were pleased to call fear: but as fear has always respect to danger, fancied, real, or possible, I should prefer to find some other name for it, because I can prove that it existed where danger was not possible, nor even by themselves apprehended. What influence these attacks had upon their own happiness it is hard to judge, because some people seem to find their enjoyment in the miseries they create for themselves: but they made woful inroads on the enjoyments of others; and for compliance, good humour, and good breeding, poor chance, indeed, had they to stand against the influence of these vehement emotions.

Though the hour was late, I had scarcely laid

myself down to rest on the night of my arrival, ere I was roused by the buzzing of voices, and the sound of soft, stolen footsteps in the adjoining gallery. The young ladies had been disturbed by extraordinary sounds, or such at least as would have been extraordinary, had not the hearing of them recurred every other night. One was afraid to go to bed, and another was afraid to get up; one could not come into her room, and another could not come out of it. Some *thought* they heard, and others were *sure* they heard—but nobody knew what. Nor was it easy to perceive the purport and end of the commotion; for no one made any attempt to ascertain the real ground of alarm: probably because they knew not where to look for it—or more likely because they were too much used to their own fears to expect to find any ground for them. And so, after much listening, and starting, and whispering, they were pleased at last to go to rest, and generously allowed me to do the same.

I ventured in the morning to suggest, that the indulgence of unreasonable fears was not the evidence of a strong mind, and did in itself tend much to weaken it: that in the presence of real danger it unfits us for exertion, and in the absence of it, costs us as much suffering, as the evil itself might do. I was answered by stories manifold and various, of things that had been, and things that might be; and the absolute certainty they still retained of having heard noises, though not one in their morning senses really supposed there had been any thing to make the noise.

Willing to close a conversation, I thought so little improving, I proposed to two of the younger girls to walk with me in the adjoining grounds. It was agreed to with pleasure. They were polite, cheerful,

and obliging, till we had walked—must I own it? not more than some few hundred yards;—when a small frog jumped out from the grass before us, and passed to the side of the path. A scream that might have startled even the insensible frog, broke from one of the young ladies, and they both protested they would go no farther on that path. It was in vain I represented to them that a frog is the most harmless of living things, having neither bite nor sting with which to wound: and that, moreover, whether it were harmless or harmful, it had taken itself willingly away from us. They replied only, that it was a hideous, shocking creature, and frightened them to death. Eagerly in vain I urged my wish to reach the place to which that path would lead us; my wishes had no weight against their fears: they would not go, and excused themselves by saying they were dreadfully afraid of *live things*. We turned aside and took another path. But alas! not far had we pursued it, when I saw upon the green turf, where it had untimely fallen, a sweet little bird already dead and cold, its pretty eye unclosed, and not a feather ruffled. I picked it up to admire it, when suddenly both my companions let go my arm and stepped some paces back, protesting loudly that they were dreadfully afraid of *dead things*, and should never like to walk that path again. Methought their path of life would scarce be easy, to whom the living and the dead were thus alike terrific.

We now pursued our walk, but soon in utter hopelessness, on my part, of any thing like comfort or enjoyment. If we were to cross a meadow there was a cow, or at least a horse in it. Whichever way we turned my companions saw a man or a dog; and when there was neither man nor dog, nor any

thing else, alive or dead, the way was so lonely they were afraid to go forward. They could not sit in the shade, lest the inhabitants of the bushes should descend on their heads—they could not sit in the sun, lest the winged insects should settle on their clothes. If I presented them with a flower, they let it fall, because they mistook the green leaf for a caterpillar. I wished them most heartily at home, and made what haste I could to rid myself of such troublesome companions.

But scarcely had we reached the house, when, for the promoting of the day's amusement, a ride was proposed to view some neighbouring ruins. It will be believed, I was comforted to find my walking companions were to be exchanged for some a little older, to whom I hoped the live things and dead things might be less alarming. But alas! we had now no need of either. When the carriage went up hill, they were afraid it would run back: when it went down hill, they were afraid it would run forward. If the horses moved slowly, they were sure they would never go on: if they went fast, they were sure they would never stop. The ride was romantic and beautiful in the extreme, but the ladies saw nothing except the ruts in the road. I attempted conversation, but was interrupted by a scream every time the carriage lost its exact perpendicular. And at last, when the excitement of their fears could be borne no longer, they insisted on stopping the carriage to inquire if the road was not very bad, and whether it was safe to go forward. The former was too obvious to need the asking, the latter they were determined not to believe. When the carriage could not stop, they insisted upon getting out to walk, and then, having made the driver go slower and slower, till the fleet hours of day were nearly

spent, they discovered that they should surely be benighted before their return, and of course be murdered; over and above having their necks broken by the badness of the road. These were certainly no pleasing anticipations; and if I did not partake the imaginary ills, I was sufficiently tired of the real ones, not to oppose returning without the accomplishment of our purpose; and listened all dinner-time to assertions, proved and explained, of the absolute impossibility of reaching the place to which we had set out.

All dinner-time, did I say? It might have been so, had not an unhappy wasp presented itself with the sweets of the second table course. There was other company besides myself at table, but that could not signify when a wasp was in the case. The servants were all put in requisition with tongs, poker, and shovel: the children started and jumped, and overset every thing in their way; and the dinner remained to cool till the murder of the foe almost restored peace to the society—but not quite—for one was still sure it would crawl. Having a little girl next me, of whose good sense I had on some occasions formed a favourable opinion, I ventured to ask her why she was so much afraid of a wasp? She replied, as I expected, because it might sting her. I asked her if she had ever been stung by one? She assured me she had, in endeavouring to drive it from the table; when, had she left it alone, it would probably have gone away of itself quite harmlessly. I asked her of the pain, and how long it lasted, and whether it was difficult to bear? Her answer implied, that though the pain was sharp yet it was short, and that the remainder of my question seemed to her ridiculous. I then submitted it to her candour, whether, in the worst issue of the case,

which, considering the number of wasps that fly, and the number of people who will not let them fly in peace, occurs but seldom, the amount of pain was really equal to the fear she had betrayed; and whether, in the certain anticipation of just so much pain by any other cause, she should have felt any fear at all? She confessed that she should not; because, as she sensibly remarked, a slight pain, to be felt for a few moments, was not worth thinking of or dreading before it was felt. But all this did not seem to her a reason why she should not scream at the sight of a wasp.* Nor indeed was it, as she gave me occasion to learn before the lapse of many hours: for the entrance of a moth, that never yet, in the memory of man, was known to sting, created to the full, as much commotion later in the evening: so much, indeed, that most of the party retreated out of the room in the midst of our musical festivities, and left me to play to myself.

Well I know, that ladies who have grown up in

* In a pleasant orchard a number of children were playing under the thick foliage of a spreading tree. One, a little boy, was suddenly heard to scream out in a most alarming manner: and when the members of the family ran to the scene of distress, he was seen fairly dancing under the influence of a paroxysm of fear.

Judging from his actions that a wasp had flown into his bosom, all were anxious to relieve him; but every one afraid to touch him, lest, by being disturbed, the dreaded insect should be made to sting more severely!!

With much care, however, his coat and vest were opened, and, instead of finding a wasp or a serpent, out fell the small part of a dried leaf that had fallen there from the tree.

All laughed heartily at the little boy, who soon became quiet; but looked very much ashamed and felt mortified, and was perhaps disappointed that he had not at least been stung a little, that it might not have so clearly appeared, that he had made so much ado about nothing.—AM. ED.

the indulgence of such fears, and have come at last to persuade themselves there is a degree of delicacy and refinement in them, must go on to the end under the penalty due to their folly; that of tormenting themselves, and annoying others. But as my whispers are for the ears of those with whom nothing is yet too late; I would represent to them the absolute inconsistency of such fears with good sense and a rational mind. All extravagance is folly; because sound sense mainly consists in giving to things their due degree of importance, and proportioning the sentiment to the occasion that calls it forth. Fear, therefore, beyond the occasion, must be folly, even when some degree of danger exists: and though as a passion inherent in our nature, we cannot but be subject to it, we believe it will generally be found greater or less in proportion as the mind is strong or weak.

The unreasonable indulgence of fear—we speak now of that fear which has a real object and occasion—is surely not consistent with the calm and humble trust we profess to repose in a superintending providence; without whose knowledge, harm cannot by any means befall us. If it be urged that we ought to foresee and provide against danger, that is true; but fear, so far from accelerating this provident care, usually unfits us for using the means we have of avoiding or resisting evil; the courageous will escape, where the timid must inevitably suffer. But that sort of fear, if for want of another term, we so must call it, which is our present subject of reprehension, has nothing, whatever, to do with danger—call it timidity, sensibility, or whatever we may, it is nothing but weakness and folly; and we may depend upon it, that being purely selfish, it is always displeasing. It is constitutional in some

minds, no doubt, more than in others; but if we have a constitutional weakness of frame, we use all means to overcome it, and often with success. Then why not so with this our mental weakness? But, in fact, much more depends on habit and education than on nature. Some children are absolutely taught it, and others are foolishly humoured in it, till it is no longer in their own power, or in the power of any one, to subdue it. I am certainly inclined to make an exception in those very extraordinary and wonderful cases of natural antipathy, of which the existence is too certain to be disputed, and too inscrutable to be understood: where an instinctive horror of some one particular thing gives such a keen perception of its presence as nothing can baffle or deceive. This, perhaps, it may be impossible to conquer. But this bears no analogy whatever to the various fears, and horrors, and dislikes, of which we have been speaking; by which reason and good sense are offended; selfishness fostered and indulged, and the feelings and convenience of others generally sacrificed to our own.

Addressing myself exclusively to my younger friends, I would induce them to consider that most of those living things for which they have conceived a horror, are in themselves beautiful, and should be objects of our admiration. I believe there is not in the whole creation, a thing that can properly be termed disgusting. It may be troublesome and annoying, if it obtrudes itself where comfort and cleanliness forbid its entrance, and may justly be removed, or, if necessary, destroyed. But in themselves, both reptiles and insects are most curiously and exquisitely wrought: and instead of shrinking from them with senseless horror, we may accustom ourselves to look at them with sensations of extreme pleasure,

as the works of Him whose wisdom and power they manifest, and of whose bounty they partake, in the enjoyment of the existence he has bestowed on them. It is to some persons, and might be to all, if they would cultivate the feeling, a source of infinite delight to watch the swarms of insects that people the whole creation in the midday of a summer sun. There are those who receive as much pleasure from the insect that settles on their finger, as from the wild-flower that blossoms under their feet. This complacent feeling in the contemplation of nature's living works, and that of persons who shrink from them with disgust, are merely habits of mind: the one may just as well be cultivated as the other.

In respect to the fear of accidents and injuries from our fellow-creatures, I believe the best cure for it is an abiding sense of the ever-present providence of God: and if we are constitutionally timid, we cannot better subdue it than by cultivating this consciousness of the Divine protection, in such a manner that it may recur to our minds on the first movement of alarm. In short, so as to become influential on our habits and sensations, and make a part of all our thoughts and feelings.

THE SABBATH.

Is there a time when moments flow,
More lovely than all beside?
It is of all the times below,
A Sabbath eve in summer-tide.

EDMESTON.

It was a Sabbath evening in the height of summer. The sun had been a half hour gone, but his beams still lingered in the clear horizon, and still the fleecy cloud was tinged with a fading touch of red. The blue vault had not yet deepened into gray, nor the landscape become obscure in the growing twilight. And yet there was a mellowing tint upon the scene, that gave of softness what it stole of splendour; like the brilliant and gifted spirit that religion has chastened into stillness. The flower that had drooped, and the leaf that had withered in the noonday heat, were already recovered by the evening's freshness; while the thrush prolonged her song, and the redbreast lingered on the bough, as if unwilling to part from such a day. Peace and repose were the character of the scene, and fancy might almost picture that the task of life was done, and all things ready for an eternal rest.

In all there seemed a fitness for the day, and for the feelings, with which I was returning from the worship of the Sabbath. The words of love and peace had dropped like holy balm upon the bosom, and put to rest its agitating cares. Shame and contrition had sunk the soul too low for opposition, and

mercy had won it into a grateful acquiescence. At peace with God, because it had drunk deeply of his grace and truth ; at peace with the world, because it seemed no longer worth contention ; at peace with itself, because self was degraded and dethroned ; the spirit partook of the evening's Sabbath hue, and only wished it could be always so. " And will it not be always so," I thought as I walked slowly homeward, " when our life's working-days are over, and the eternal Sabbath dawns upon our souls ? A little while, and what is now but a brief foretaste, a passing semblance of celestial peace, will be an eternal and unchanging reality. A little while, and the smile of our Father will no more be averted, the world renounced, will no more resume its power, and self submitted, will no more rebel. And if there be such pleasure in an earthly Sabbath, interrupted as it is with our coldness, and carelessness, and earthliness, what will be the bliss of that eternal Sabbath for which we are preparing ?" And then I considered the goodness of God in this institution, by which one day in seven is separated from the rest, to be employed in making happy what the occupations of the other six too often tend to make wretched ; and to sanctify what they are too well fitted to corrupt. Prone as we are to sin, and subject as we are to sorrow, our most lawful occupations are fraught with anxiety and danger. What a comfort, then, that there is one day in which it is our duty to neglect them, to forget them, and give up ourselves entirely to thoughts and pursuits of which the fruits are love, and holiness, and joy : to have nothing to do but to acquaint ourselves with God and be at peace.

I passed the day-labourer in his clean Sunday dress, with his Bible under his arm, and thought how

he must enjoy the repose of such a day, his only means of instruction, perhaps his only rest from effort and endurance. I overtook the mechanic, and fancied from the expression of content upon his features, that he was telling over the stores of consolation he had gathered, to feed on in his workshop during all the week. Many little children were tripping by my side, in their plain neat dresses, some with books in their hands. I looked at them, and hoped something had that day been taught them in the Sunday-school that would sweeten the lot for which they were preparing. A little longer musing, and I should have persuaded myself the Sabbath was a day that all men love, and the calm of nature, what all were sharing, and the song of gratitude what all were singing. But truth was at hand, and fancy must give place.

When I turned from the meadows into the public road, the passengers began to thicken on my path. The town had poured out its population in every direction for their afternoon walk, and the hills and the pathways were scattered thick with figures of various appearance, all well-dressed and neat, and seemingly free from care. There was nothing at first strongly to invade my previous feelings. I could still fancy that the poor labourer, or richer tradesman, was enjoying with his wife and children the beauties of creation and the grateful recollection of a day well spent: and in many a lowly hovel, as I passed it, I saw, in interesting group, the father attentively perusing his Bible, while the mother was setting out the plain, spare supper. Truth might indeed have told that some who enjoyed the leisure of the day had thought nothing of Him whose day it was; and some who were tasting of nature's charms, felt nothing of gratitude to Him who gave

them ; but so much was not written on their brow ; and they wore at least an air of enjoyment that became the hour.

Not so, when, proceeding a little farther, I met the gay equipage returning from a ride. Not so, when I saw the light skiff, with sails unfurled, gliding merrily towards the shore. Whoever was within them, the day of God was here profaned by the direct breaking of his holy law. He had said, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy:" they disobeyed and boldly denied His right to command. Those who took the pleasure, were guilty of the sin of those they taught and paid to pursue on the Sunday the occupation of the week, and unhallow in thought and deed the day that God made sacred. They would say, perhaps, they spent an hour in a recreation very harmlessly, and no way inconsistent with their thoughts of holiness ; but for their one hour of harmless recreation, others must toil many. The horses that were used must be cleaned ; the hand that plied the oar for them would ply for others encouraged by their example. The words of God are plain and positive, and impossible to misconstrue ; therefore the breach of them is a bold refusal to comply with his command, made openly in the face of earth and heaven. They would urge, no doubt, that they had kept holy enough of the day, in going twice to the service appointed. Alas ! if they had been there, it should almost seem to make their guilt the greater ; for now, it may be, they were sinning against light and knowledge.

The day was closing fast : already the dark outline of form was all that remained distinct, and as I entered the town, the doors were closing and

lights were beginning to gleam from every window. My pleasing reverie had been painfully dissipated : my mind was occupied in considering of the way in which Sunday is usually past : and, presuming that when windows stand open, no secrets are passing within, I set myself to observe how people were employed in the various houses as I passed them : not without hope that I might gather something useful, in the way of warning or example, for my readers.

I passed a window where noisy mirth bespoke the late dinner party ; where it was evident the company would not, and the domestics could not, remember it was the Sabbath ; except in so far as they sighed in secret that decency allowed them not to dance or play at cards ; but there I paused not.—There was nothing doubtful among these. They, too, had been to church—themselves—but not their servants, who had this dinner to make ready. As soon as they came forth from the sacred walls, they had passed with all speed from house to house to make their morning calls : I say not to wipe off the serious impression of the service, for it had made none ; but to get rid of the time till the bells should ring again. Unless they preferred a ride, they had gone a second time to church : they had plenty of time to dress for dinner, and then, thanks to this party, there was no more trouble of disposing of the hours till bed-time.

Neither did I stop long, where, in a more decent way, but with much the same purpose, a few friends had called in upon some other few, for the charitable purpose of passing away an evening on which they thought it right to be quiet and abstain from their weekly occupations, and yet found it very te-

dious. But I made a longer pause when I arrived under a window where there were clearly none present but the family that abode there, and it was pretty evident that no one had lost the recollection that it was the Sabbath. Knew I this from the smile of gratitude and heavenly peace that shone on their features? My readers shall judge. "I wish it was bed-time," said a little girl, not usually in haste to go to bed; "I am so tired of having nothing to do!" Though in truth she had risen two hours later than usual that morning.

"I think our clock must be too slow," replied her brother. "You know we were hardly dressed for breakfast when the bells began to ring this morning. It must be more than half past seven;" and with a weary yawn he threw himself on the rug to play with the spaniel.

All were not alike unfortunate: for I observed a young lady at her writing desk, folding and sealing as many letters as one can reasonably suppose she might have occasion to write in a week. How happy for her correspondents, that one day in seven was a leisure day: a day on which the hours, being less valuable, could be better spared than on any other! As I could not see within the letters, I am bound in charity to suppose the subject of them was in unison with the feelings and previous occupations of the day. How should they be otherwise? A heart that, from the rising till the going down of the Sabbath sun, had been in earnest devotion before God; had mourned in many a prayer the consciousness of sin, and grown light under the sweet assurance of its pardon; that had trembled at the awful denunciations pronounced on the dissembler, and been moved, amazed, overwhelmed, with the contemplation of the

Redeemer's love and the Father's fond forbearance. It was impossible that such a heart could turn immediately to common themes ; the amusements of yesterday and the business of to-morrow, and the thousand trifles that bespeak a mind unoccupied by deeper interests. If I could not penetrate the letters to find where the heart had been, and where the thoughts, I was at least certain that they had been together ; and that the language of the letters had gone after them : and I felt much grief at a practice that could leave it doubtful whether they might not altogether have gone wrong. No common observer could know that a young lady who kept all her letters to write on a Sunday, did so that they might wear a deeper tone of piety, be the more faithful mirror of her better feelings, conveying greater good to others and more glory to God. Common observers might even go so far as to suppose it was a profane compounding between her conscience and her choice : permitting her to send her spirit to scenes, where in person she dared not go, and to occupy her thoughts with things she dared not do. I could not but bewail the bad example of a practice so equivocal, where the deed was plain to all, the inducement to it, a secret between herself and God.

Reclining on a sofa opposite, I observed another lady intent upon the perusal of a daily newspaper. Therein at least was nothing doubtful ; for the contents of a newspaper are known to all ; and doubtless the mind that had been fed all day upon the high and holy things of heaven and eternity, must have found it a seasonable draught of temporalities, to rid itself of the effects or impressions that might remain. I had some reason to doubt, from all I heard, whether this young lady would not have

thought it wasting time to read the newspaper on a Monday, because she had so many other things to do. But on Sunday, alas ! on Sunday—on that day which is God's, and not our own ; it was a relief to find anything that might be done. And all together could not stay the weariness with which they turned their eyes towards the lagging timepiece, that seemed but to go the slower for their impatience to be rid of a day, which, though shortened at either hand, was still too long.

And yet these people, and thousands who do like them, are going, so they tell us, and take it but ill that we should doubt it, to that blessed dwelling-place where there is no employ but one ;—the very one of which they grow so weary here : where the utmost reach of happiness is no more but the completion and duration endless, of that which they are so little willing to begin ; a rest from the agitating cares of time and sense, and a devoting of time, and thoughts, and powers, to the worship of the Deity ; the contemplation of his works, and the performance of his will. This is a happiness that is not for us here ; we cannot reach it if we would. But that we may taste of it ; that we may cultivate a desire and a liking to it ; an imperfect Sabbath has been at certain intervals appointed us, in which we are permitted, nay, commanded under all the penalties of disobedience, to take of the food on which our perfected spirits will eternally be fed, if the feast of heaven be preparing for us. The day comes round, and finds so little welcome, it is but an importunate intruder on our enjoyments, an interruption to our business. The food we are required to take is so unpalatable, we are obliged to mix with it as much as possible of our weekly fare to enable

us to take it. So averse are we to this faint semblance of the eternal state, that not even the terrors of God's broken law can force us to partake of it. The aversion must be strong indeed, that will make us risk so much by disobedience, rather than make the sacrifice of a few brief hours. And to what is it we are so averse? Let us consider it well.

FRIENDSHIP.

For Friendship is no plant of hasty growth ;
Though rooted in esteem's deep soil, the slow
And gradual culture of kind intercourse
Must bring it to perfection.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THERE are a great number of things that every body says for no reason that can be perceived, but because every body always has said them: and, whatever be the recommendation to these current opinions, or rather assertions, for opinion has little to do with them, it is certainly not *their* truth. There is not one in ten of the persons who talk on these universal topics, that has ever considered whether what it is customary to say, be true or not; and though they are matters of every-day experience, they seldom pause to compare their habits of talking with their actual observation on the subject. But observation, unfortunately, we most of us make none, till past the age at which it would most avail us. We take up our sentiments, and not seldom our very feelings, upon trust; and it is not till after many a hard rub and bitter pang, we come to perceive, that had we felt more justly, we need not have suffered. Perhaps this is an evil in some degree irremediable: there are many who cannot, and more who will not, think and judge on their own behalf. What they were taught in their youth they will believe in their age, and what they said at fifteen they

will go on saying at fifty ; though the whole course and current of their observations, had they made any, would go to disprove it. But, if this is the case, and if it must be so, it is but of the more importance what habits of thinking and feeling young people receive on entering a world that will not change its course to meet their expectations, or show overmuch indulgence to their mistakes. If the mischief ended where we began to trace it, with the mistaken sentiments given forth in the talk of society, it would be small, and we would let it pass as a harmless fiction: but not unfrequently it goes to the dearest and tenderest interests of our bosoms, to the very vitals of our earthly happiness. It may indeed do worse ; for it may assail our virtues and attain our souls with sin, by giving a check to the benevolent affections, and inducing a morose and cynical habit of feeling towards our fellow-creatures, the very reverse of what Christianity enjoys.

These reflections, something long, as those may have thought who are in a hurry to know what they mean, were excited in my mind by a conversation I recently heard in a party of young ladies, and which I take as a pattern and semblance of twenty other conversations I have heard in twenty similar parties. Friendship was, as it very often is, the subject of the discussion, and though the words have escaped my memory, I can well recall the substance of the remarks. One lady boldly asserted, that there was no such thing as friendship in the world, where all was insincerity and selfishness. I looked, but saw not in her mirthful eye and unfurrowed cheeks any traces of the sorrow and ill usage, that I thought should alone have wrung from gentle lips so harsh a sentence, and I wondered where in twenty brief years, she could have learned so hard a lesson. Have

known it, she could not; therefore I concluded she had taken it upon trust from the poets, who are fain to tell all the ill they can of human nature, because it makes better poetry than the good.

The remark was taken up, as might be expected, by a young champion who thought, or said without thinking, that friendship was—I really cannot undertake to say what—but all the things that young ladies usually put into their themes at school: something very interminable, illimitable, and immutable. From this the discussion grew, and how it was, and what it was, went on to be discussed. I cannot pursue the thread of the discourse; but the amount of it was this: one thought friendship was the summer portion only of the blest; a flower for the brow of the prosperous, that the child of misfortune must never gather. Another thought, that all interest being destructive of its very essence, it could not be trusted unless there was an utter destitution of every thing that might recommend us to favour, or requite affection. This lady must have been brought to the depth of wretchedness ere she ever could be sure she had a friend. Some, I found, thought it was made up of a great deal of sensibility, vulgarly called jealousy; that was to take umbrage at every seeming slight, to the indescribable torment of either party. Some betrayed, if they did not exactly say it, that they thought friendship such an absolute unity, that it would be a less crime to worship two gods than to love two friends! Therefore to bring it to its perfection it was necessary that all beside should be despised and disregarded.

Others, very young, and of course soon to grow wiser, thought it consisted in the exact disclosure of your own concerns, and those of every body else with which you might chance to become acquainted;

others, that it required such exact conformity in opinion, thought, and feeling, as should make it impossible to differ; and others, that it implied such generous interference even with the feelings as well as affairs of its object, that it should spend itself in disinterested reproaches and unasked advice. But however differing else, all were sure that friendship but usurped the name, unless it were purely disinterested, endlessly durable, and beyond the reach of time and circumstance to change it: and all were going forth in the full certainty of finding friends, each one after the pattern of her own imagination: the first speaker only excepted, who was fully determined never to find any, or never to trust them if she did.

I marked with pained attention the warm glow of expectation so soon to be blighted, and reflected deeply on the many heart-aches with which they must unlearn their errors. I saw that each one was likely to pass over and reject the richest blessing of earth, even in the very pursuing of it, from having sketched in imagination an unressembling portrait of the object of pursuit. "When Friendship meets them," I said, "they will not know her. Can no one draw for them a better likeness?"

It is the language of books and the language of society, that friends are inconstant, and friendship but little to be depended on; and the belief, where it is really received, goes far to make a truth of that which else were false, by creating what it suspects. Few of us but have lived already long enough to know the bitterness of being disappointed in our affections, and deceived in our calculations, by those with whom, in the various relationships of life, we are brought in contact. Perhaps the aggregate of pain from this cause is greater than from any other

cause whatever. And yet it is much to be doubted, whether nearly the whole of this suffering does not arise from our own unreasonable and mistaken expectations. There are none so unfortunate, but they meet with some kindness in the world; and none, I believe, so fortunate, but that they meet with much less than they might do were it not their own fault.

In the first place, we are mistaken in our expectation that friendship should be disinterested. It neither is, nor can be. It may be so in action, but never in the sentiment: there is always an equivalent to be returned. If not, it may be generosity, it may be benevolence, but friendship is not the name for it. As soon as we intermingle with our fellow-creatures, we begin to form preferences to one above another. The circumstances that decide this preference are infinitely various; but be they what they may, the movement in the first instance is purely selfish. In the advances we make, the attentions we pay, and the attempts to recommend ourselves to their affections, it is our happiness, not theirs, of which the increase is in our view. In some way or other, they pleased us before we began to love them: our friendship therefore is a purchase, not a gift: a part of the price is paid, and the rest is in expectation. If we examine the movements of our own hearts, we must be sure that this is the case: and yet we are so unreasonable as to expect our friends should be purely disinterested, and, after having secured their affections, we neglect to pay the price, and expect they should be continued to us for nothing. We grow careless of pleasing them: inconsiderate of their feelings, and heedless of the government of our own tempers towards them; and then we complain of inconstancy, if they like us not so well as when dressed out in our best for the re-

ception of their favour. Yet it is in fact we that are changed, not they.

Another fruitful source of disappointment in our attachments is, that while we are much more quick in detecting the faults of others than our own, we absurdly require that every one should be faultless but ourselves. We do not say that we expect this in our friends, but we do expect it, and our conduct proves that we expect it. We begin also with believing it. The obscurity of distance; the veil that the proprieties of society cast over nature's deformity; the dazzling glitter of exterior qualities, baffle for a time our most penetrating glances, and the imperfect vision seems all that we should have it. Our unexperienced hearts, and some, indeed, that should be better taught, fondly believe it to be all it seems, and begin their attachment in full hope to find it so. What wonder, then, that the bitterest disappointment should ensue, when, on more close acquaintance, we find them full of imperfections, perhaps of most glaring faults, and we begin to express disgust, sometimes even resentment, that they are not what we took them for.

But was this their fault or ours? Did they not present themselves to us in a garb of mortal flesh; and do we not know that mortals are imperfect; soiled with sin—nay, sunk so very, very low in it, that however the outside be fair, the interior is corrupt and altogether vile? He who knows all, alone knows how corrupt it is: the heart itself, enlightened by his grace, is more deeply in the secret than any without can be; but if the thing we love be mortal, something of it we must perceive; and more and more of it we must perceive as we look closer. If this is to disappoint and revolt us, and draw harsh reproaches and bitter recriminations from our lips,

there is but One on whom we can fix our hearts with safety ; and He is one, alas ! we show so little disposition to love, as proves that, with all our complainings and bewailings of each other's faultiness, our friends are as good as will at present suit us.

Another cause of mortification is, that we expect too much from those who do truly and really love us. We expect that they should prefer our interests, feelings, and purposes to their own. This is not and cannot be. Truth has recorded many instances, and fiction has invented an abundance more, in which, on some great emergency, this has been the case ; and in the common relationships of life, we may every day see the most lovely and endearing instances of self-negation in favour of those on whom our hearts are fixed. But these are sacrifices, they are efforts against the current ; they ought never to be presumed upon, and never exacted, if it be possible to avoid it. But instead of this forbearance, the most willing hand becomes the most hardly taxed—the more kindness we receive the more we demand : the friend who professes to love us must yield every thing for us ; bear every thing from us, and do every thing for us, and if it come out at length that he should have interests, and purposes, and feelings of his own, we are wounded and surprised, and exclaim against the fallibility of human affections. Yes, they are fallible, and they are limited, as all things finite are ; and if we did not persist in disbelieving this truth, we need not suffer these bitter disappointments. There never was but One whose love confessed no limit ; and he was more than man. The more he was provoked the more he seemed to love : his kindness grew upon the injuries that repulsed it, and the greater the burdens heaped upon him, the lower he bowed his sacred head to bear them. His

favour neither grows on our deservings, nor is chilled by our demerits: he gives all and takes nothing in return; and the more we demand, the more we confide, so much the more is he willing to bestow on us. But this is the portrait of no earthly friend, and unless it bear some resemblance to ourselves, we have no right to expect it should be.

(And then the mutability of all sublunary things:—Is it in the power of human constancy to fix them? However determined to keep them, can the pleasures of to-day be the pleasures of to-morrow, drunk on with unsated appetite? Does the waste of years, and the growth of knowledge, and the change of habits, make no change in our feelings and tastes? We part from our friend in the full glow of reciprocal affection, and think to meet again exactly as we parted. Our attachment may indeed outlive the separation, and from youth to age be substantially the same. But meantime the character of each is slowly changing; new habits are acquiring, and new judgments forming. We meet again, and are surprised to find no more the unity of spirit that once united us, the assimilation of feeling that once made our society so delightful to each other. And again in bitter disappointment we inveigh against the falseness and versatility of those who once took so much delight in us. But are they to blame? Is it not the common course of all things earthly, on which changed and changeable is irrevocably written? .

And lastly, but not least productive of these painful issues; there is the false system under which we form our friendships, as we do all things else that concern us upon earth—a system of error as it regards ourselves, our situation, and our destiny. We forget that we are strangers and pilgrims upon earth,

hurried forward to a distant and far other state. Our friends may be our fond companions by the way, they may assuage our sorrows and heighten our delights, and with a transient tenderness may hold our hands and assist us in our task ; but their bosoms must no more be our resting-place than any other thing on earth ; they are treasures that must be parted from ; they are possessions that time must steal ; they are goods that must corrupt and pass away. Heaven has pronounced it so, and so it must be. And if in this, as in all other things, we persist in acting, feeling, and expecting, as if the world were our home, and the things of it our lasting heritage : instead of being, as they might, our sweetest consolation, our purest enjoyment, and highest zest of life ; our friendships must become a source of mortification, chagrin, and discontent.

But are we, therefore, to say there is no such thing as friendship ; or that it is not worth seeking ; morosely repel it, or suspiciously distrust it ? If we do, we shall pay our folly's price in the forfeiture of that without which, however we may pretend, we never are or can be happy ; preferring to go without the very greatest of all earthly good, because it is not what perhaps it may be in heaven. Rather than this, it would be wise so to moderate our expectation and adapt our conduct, as to gain of it a larger measure : or, as far as may be possible, to gather of its flowers without exposing ourselves to be wounded by the thorns it bears. This is only to be done by setting out in life with juster feelings and fairer expectations.

It is not true that friends are few, and kindness rare. No one ever needed friends and deserved them, and found them not : but we do not know them when we see them, or deal with them justly,

when we have them. We must allow others to be as variable, and imperfect, and faulty as ourselves. We do not wish our young readers to love their friends less, but to love them as what they are, rather than as what they wish them to be; and instead of the jealous pertinacity that is wounded by every appearance of change; and disgusted by every detection of a fault, and ready to distrust and cast away the kindest friends on every trifling difference of behaviour or feeling; to cultivate a moderation in their demands; a patient allowance for the effect of time and circumstance; an indulgence towards peculiarities of temper and character, and above all, such a close examination of what passes in their own hearts, as will teach them better to understand and excuse what they detect in the hearts of others, ever remembering that all things on earth are earthly, and therefore changeful, perishable, and uncertain.

EMULATION.

As in the hazy darkness of the scarcely-breaking twilight, every object is indistinct and uncertain; and the more the eye searches the more it is bewildered; and the foot moves uncertainly, unable to discern between the firm green sward and the darkening chasm—so obscured, so uncertain were the moral perceptions of mankind, ere the day star of Christian truth arose upon our world. They who talked most of virtue, and professed to love it most, and would perhaps have loved it had they known what it was, mistook the nature of the good they sought, and took evil in its stead. When the great man of antiquity prepared the tissue of moral beauty with which to dress himself for popular applause, pride and selfishness were the thread with which he wove it; the flowers he wrought in it were the evanescent charms of time and sense. Examining the finest specimens of Greek and Roman virtue, what do we find them? The hero was one to whom the world was a plaything, and men's lives a toy. His hard bosom was forbidden every kindly emotion; every tender sympathy was imperiously sacrificed to a stern will, determined on self-aggrandizement. He was a traitor, a tyrant, and a robber; yet he lived admired, respected, and, it may be, beloved; and died, as he believed, the favourite of the gods: still looking to the laurel wreath as his eternal crown, and the tortures of his enemies as the amusement of his Elysium.

The sage, the philosopher, though a more harmless, was a more self-deluding being still. He sought the applause of the world in affecting to despise it; and did but call off his senses, passions, and feelings from the things around him, to fix them solely and entirely on himself. He mistook for greatness the contempt with which he rejected all the good that God or man could offer, and for magnanimity the defiance with which he braved Heaven itself to subdue him. And these were the high standards of heathen virtue, by others admired at a distance, and at a distance imitated. A self-sufficing pride, an impatient susceptibility that would not suffer the slightest touch of wrong; a bitterness of revenge that never pardoned it; these were among the foremost of a heathen's virtues. In considering the institutions of Lycurgus and other ancient legislators for the education of youth, harsh and unnatural as they appear to us, we are struck with their fitness to effect the purpose designed in them, of rearing their children to what had been accepted as the standard of moral excellence. Having determined that there was more disgrace in the discovery of a theft, than in the theft itself, the Spartans pursued a consistent purpose in teaching their children to steal adroitly; and thus throughout, we find the institutions of the wisest of heathen nations admirably fitted to make their children what they considered that they ought to be: virtuous, according to their dark perceptions; heroes and wise men, such as we have described.

Perhaps my readers are thinking, and my critics making ready to assert, that I am talking instead of listening; and lamenting what has been, rather than observing what is. But they are mistaken. Little connected as the subjects may seem, I never should

have thought of Cato, or Lycurgus, or Cæsar, or Diogenes, if I had not listened one whole day in mute attention to the progress of education in a certain school-room, and following thence into the world its tutored inmates, I traced in idea the results of all the lessons I had seen them learning. When they were taught music, it was expected they should play; when they were taught French, it was expected they should understand it: and except in some few unhappy instances, I suppose the results corresponded with the expectations. But some things I observed were taught them that it was not expected they should learn, or desirable that they should practise: and if, in after life, they evinced an unexpected proficiency in these studies, few, perhaps, of their instructors would recognize the fruit of their own labours; the produce of the seed their industry had sown.

Parents who brought their daughters to this school—at least I heard it of so many, that I am inclined to suppose it of the rest—had said either that they were so stupid they could not, or so careless they would not, pursue their studies well at home; and they thought that the emulation excited by rivalry with others would much tend to promote their progress. The governess who should venture to contradict this introductory clause would probably lose her school: added to which, it is an admitted rule, that what every one says must be true. By parity of reasoning, what one is always hearing, one must believe; and conscientiously, and in pure good faith, this lady undertook what was asked of her, and performed what she undertook. The young ladies were powerfully stimulated by the very means prescribed, and made a very rapid progress in every thing—yes, alas! in much that was unperceived and un-

suspected by those who meant not to teach them any thing but good: unperceived by any one, perhaps, but myself, whose peculiar business there it was to look out for what was wrong; not maliciously, as I beg my readers to believe, but as the physician inquires for the symptoms of the disease he apprehends.

In the centre of a long and carpetless floor, around a coverless table—a cold and uncomfortable prospect, that I hope had not the same chilling influence on their faculties as it would have on mine—and in defiance of all consequent spine-complaints, placed upright upon a backless form, there sat a large circle of young ladies, not many years apart in age, and considered, I suppose, from their being classed together, on something like a level of attainments. They were receiving, it appeared, a lesson of French from the master, and producing for his inspection the lessons conned or written in his absence. A pert-looking little creature, whose confidence bespoke a priority her size could not have claimed, handed up her exercise with all the air of certain, and cheaply-earned success, chattered through her lessons as if they had grown upon her tongue; and in a tone of carelessness withal, that seemed determined to show it cost her no pains. Monsieur, too happy to escape the murderous garbling of his native tongue, to which he was perpetually condemned, reiterated his “Good, good, Brave, brave,” with many a whispered and broken sentence—“Well learnt, good girl,” the last being, withal, by no means proved. The little lady turned her black eyes round the circle, with a look that said as plainly as words could have done, “Now, stupid girls, do the best you can, for you cannot help yourselves.” This young lady was too well-bred to laugh or mock; but as I watched her

through the remaining lessons, a slight movement of the upper lip when any one made a blunder, a certain wriggle on her seat whenever their ignorance caused detention, betrayed sufficiently her impatience of their slowness, and triumph in her own superiority.

A pretty, pensive-looking girl taller by half the head than her companions; in whose meek eye a sensitive timidity beamed almost distressingly, had the misfortune to be addressed with a preliminary exhortation to do as well as the Miss who had preceded her. This exordium was fatal; a lesson, very respectably done, and giving evident tokens of a great deal of pains, was begun and finished with a blush, that, to put the best construction on it, confessed a painful sense of inferiority, and a feeling of shame, that having done the best, it was not better. Many others followed: among the rest a heavy-looking girl, whose air of cowed despondency, particularly took my attention; the helpless block-head of her class, whose right to be hindmost had never been disputed since she came into it. Her ill-formed lips could no more pronounce the words, than her memory could retain them. Yet this poor girl was urged, and upbraided, and reminded how much she was bigger than those who were less, and how little less than those who were bigger, and how absolutely inferior to them all; and the air of discouraging indifference with which the books were thrown back to her, was only equalled by the sullen acquiescence in disgrace with which they were received.

My attention was at this moment distracted by a voice behind me raised something above concert pitch, in reproaches against a child, whose ruddy, vacant face, and large blue eyes, beamed any thing at

that moment, but a sister's feeling, for having allowed a younger sister to get so much before her; while the sister's swarthy countenance and deep-sunk eye, bespoke a power of intellect with which the little Hebe might have contended long enough. In this corner was a scene of excitement equal to any thing the most anxious mother could desire for the stimulus of her daughter's talents. The ladies here were all upon their feet in a circle round their teacher, answering questions made to them in succession, and taking places, as it is called, according to the correctness of the replies. It was not on their own proficiency only the victory now depended; all honours must be won upon a rival's blunders: and like the riders on a balanced plank, the uprising of the one was proportioned to the downgoing of the other. Never were pugilists met with looks of more determined contention than these gentle wrestlers for literary honour. I could not mark without a pang the look of disappointment in a child who knew the answer when she found the one above her knew it too: and the eager delight with which another heard the blunder that gave scope for the display of her own proficiency. Envy, malice, jealousy, contempt, every evil passion of which their little bosoms were susceptible, played in succession on their features; their teacher, meantime as if she took them all for virtues, went on adding fuel to the flame, in praises, taunts, and comparisons, without any regard to the passions she was exciting, or the feelings she was perverting.

I heard much more, but I have told enough for my purpose. This is the stimulant which, under the gentle name of Emulation, is thought by many indispensable to the successful education of children. The term itself is found in Scripture classed with no

fair company. But we mind not the term, which we are aware in the original admits of a good, as well as a bad sense. Is the thing itself good? It is asserted that children will not learn without it; that competition is essential to their progress. We doubt it much: we see not why the praise absolute may not be as enticing as the praise comparative. But let this point be conceded, if it must, and be it admitted that a girl will learn more in the hope of outshining, or the fear of being out shone, than she can do either from the desire of knowledge, or a wish to please her instructor, or any other motive. Still the question is not at rest.

The day-star of truth has risen upon our world, and opened to our view a standard of moral excellency such as heathens never dreamed of. Pride, the stronghold of a heathen's virtue, has been discovered to be a soul-destroying sin: the very sin that drove angels from heaven, and man from paradise. Strife, resentment, ambition, rivalry, contention, envy, self-preference, have been determined to be sins. The eternal blessing has been pronounced by lips divine, not on the successful contender for this world's praise, but on the meek in spirit and the pure in heart. Our children, as every pious parent hopes, may hereafter be accepted as the servants and followers of Him, who, when he comes, should he acknowledge them as his children, will not ask what they know, but what they are. Do we act as consistently as heathens did, teaching them that all the attainments and all the knowledge in the world were a dear-bought purchase at the expense of one right feeling, of one solid Christian virtue? I fear not.

Let any one of my young readers but watch the movements of her own heart, and judge of the fact:

for she is competent to do so, however young. What is her motive for the extraordinary exertions she is making in some particular study to-day? The wish to gain approbation and esteem; a desire to make the utmost use of the talents given her, perhaps the simple wish to excel in that particular study for her own gratification: or is it the fear that some one will do better: that some one she desires to surpass will come up to her? Suppose the point gained, and herself held up as an example and a shame to those who have done worse, she is delighted; but why? Would she have been equally delighted if every one else had done as well? Or, suppose she has failed—why is she depressed? With regret that she did not make more exertion, and a resolve to repair it to-morrow, or with despite that others succeeded better, envy of their superior talents, and dissatisfaction with her own? If the former be the case in any of these supposed probabilities, the stimulus of rivalry was clearly unnecessary, for her feelings were independent of all comparison: if the latter, she gained improvement perhaps; she gained an accomplishment perhaps, and she went to bed satisfied that she had done well. But she had been proud, or jealous, or envious, or discontented. Pride, envy, jealousy, and discontent, are sins; by every indulgence of them, God is offended; by every excitement of them an evil passion is fostered and strengthened.

The nature of this seed is but too well proved by the harvest it produces. In society, a close observer might be astonished, if less inured to it, at the little idea of wrong attached to feelings of this description. There are a few, who if they know themselves, can say they were never pained by the praises of another, nor ever depreciated the merits of another to enhance their own. If we say this is natural, and

cannot be prevented; yes, but it is hateful, it is sinful, it is diabolical. The gospel has been sent to disclose to us our state of natural delusion, by the shedding on our bosoms of a purer light; and it has ranked these feelings in the catalogue of moral crimes, most offensive to God and man, and deserving of eternal condemnation. We in our great wisdom keep the opinions of our heathen ancestors, and in our great madness act upon them; teach them to our children, and they say they cannot be educated without them. Then let them remain for ever ignorant.

We strangely miscalculate, even for our happiness in this world, when we sacrifice character to acquirements of any kind. That is indeed to part from our decent and necessary clothing, for the purchase of some brilliant jewel with which to deck ourselves. I surely shall not be suspected of too lightly estimating the advantage of mental cultivation and polite accomplishments. By every proper motive, by every sinless incentive, we may provoke our pupils to exertion. To the gifted we may say, make use by assiduity of what you have: to the less endowed, make amends by assiduity for what you have not; and by praise or blame enforce the precept. But, if we must choose between the moral and the intellectual good; if the culture that is to raise the flower, must foster with it the poisonous weed, we hold the utmost acquisition of human intellect light indeed. Its future fruits will never allay the passions excited for its acquisition. When sin becomes the burden and the shame of a bosom struggling, and yet unable to repress it, learning and talent will not whisper peace. When the applause, and the triumph, and the approbation of men, are past and forgotten, the evil thought, the

sinful emotion, will remain upon the conscience ; and, unless mercy blot it thence, on Heaven's eternal records.

NOTE. It has often been a question of vital importance to the interest and happiness of the youth of our country, whether, in the work of education, the spirit of emulation should be so strongly appealed to as an incentive to exertion ; and whether the mere desire of excelling ought to be encouraged.

The subject is about to be better understood, and to receive from the most enlightened friends of early instruction, that consideration which its high importance justly claims.

It has been well remarked, that the excitement produced by competition, may be as transient as it is strong ; that it has a tendency to exhaust the powers, and reduce the mind to lassitude and despondency. Artificial stimulants are the natural antecedents of languor and debility. Competition, the necessary offspring of emulation, rather impedes, than promotes the progress of the mind toward the highest attainments, and sets up but a low standard for exertion. To rise above the mark which a rival has attained is its object. If this object is secured, the mind is given up to indolence : if not it is reduced to discouragement. Surely with an eye upon a higher standard, furnished by unerring wisdom and perfect excellence, these disastrous results might be avoided ; larger attainments might be made, and a constant, healthful enlargement of the faculties, might be secured. But mark the effect of emulation on the moral character. Who can deny that it is a fruitful source of jealousy ; that it generally inflates the successful aspirant with pride, and fills his disappointed rival with envy ?

How is the reward of successful competition in this matter consistent with evangelical morality ? How can it be consistent with those Christian principles which forbid the "seeking of the honour that cometh from men," and of comparing ourselves among ourselves ; or with those Christian injunctions, which bind us to "love our our neighbours as ourselves," and "in honour to prefer one another ?" And shall the moral character of the youth of America be marred, and their eternal happiness be hazarded for the sake of a doubtful intellectual auxiliary ?

EVIL SPEAKING.

———'Tis Slander,
Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world.

ONE day, I suppose my readers do not exactly care what day, or what sort of a day, or at what hour, or whether in spring or autumn, in sunshine or in clouds. So it was one day, I had been walking a considerable distance through lanes where nature, unchecked by any interference on the part of man, brought forth together, in boundless luxuriance, her bitters and her sweets. The poisonous Nightshade twined her branches round the honied Woodbine. The Bindweed laid its head of pure and spotless white on the hard bosom of a neighbouring Thorn. The Thistle and the Hairbel grew side by side. It was with difficulty, in some places, I had made my way through the midst of them; and sometimes the Brambles caught my dress, and sometimes I set my foot upon a Thistle: and when I attempted to gather a flower, the thorns pricked, and the nettles stung me. But I do not remember that I felt any surprise, or any sort of resentment, that they did so. I neither wondered they should grow there, nor desired that they should be rooted out. I cannot recollect, indeed, that I had any thoughts upon the subject; it was so natural they

should be there, and being there, that they should do what they did. All seemed too much of course to claim any observation.

Leaving these wild paths, I entered by a gateway into grounds that, though scarcely extensive enough to claim the title of a park, were yet approaching to it in character, very beautiful, and of no inconsiderable extent. Though the house was not in sight, no one could doubt it was the appendage of some goodly mansion, on which the owner expended constant attention, and which it pleased him to adorn beautifully. The magnificent trees, branching even to the ground, showed the care with which they had been protected from the browsing of the cattle. The flowering shrubs told by their sunny looks that they or their forefathers had been bred in something less than fifty-two degrees of latitude.* A slender Leveret stole fleetly over the turf, scarcely bending under its steps; and a Squirrel, that looked as if he had been just combed and dressed, was leaping among the trees. But the Cur that should enter there was doomed to death, by notice written upon a board; and his owner too, unless the spring-guns could distinguish between the honest man and the thief. And now my path was broad and straight, and beaten very hard: having no more to force my road through narrow ways and paths uncertain, I began to walk freely and carelessly. Occupied with the altered beauty of the scene around me, I did not look where I was treading. Nature was not displaced by art, for she was here in all her splendour, in the full-dress garb with which taste, and industry and wealth, had clothed her, yet decked in no other beauties than her own.

* The latitude of that part of England which is the scene of this story.

My mind became occupied with admiring, that He, who had made a world so beautiful that nothing could be wanting to it, had yet left to its inhabitants the means of improving it, and adding to its charms; for doubtless, even in Eden, it was the business of man to train and beautify what nature made. And now that it has become his harder task to humour the unwilling soil, and provide against a capricious climate, a mass of the most exquisite materials remains to him, and his toil and care are repaid by every combination of beauty, which taste can suggest, and skill accomplish. While I was thinking all this—one may think a great many wise things in less time than one can say them—and not regarding where I walked, I set my foot upon some low thistles, negligently left upon the path, and while it tingled from their thorns, felt very much inclined to upbraid the thistles that grew where thistles should not; and the gardener that did not dig them up, and the master that did not keep a better gardener. But why did that excite surprise, and almost indignation here, which a short time before did not awaken so much as a reflection?

The world is a wide wilderness. Things good and excellent are strangely mixed in it with corruptions the vilest and the basest. The most enormous crimes crowd round and stifle the most generous feelings. Natural virtues, the broken outlines of that image once impressed upon the heart of man; now indistinct, and faint, and almost gone, are found in such base company, and it is true, of nations as of individuals, that on the most brilliant character, is marked the foulest spots. We have but to read the history of men in their natural state, to learn that this has been so: we have but to study the lives and characters of persons, under no other in-

fluence than that of natural feeling, to be assured it is so still. But in this wilderness there is a garden, which he who made it surely takes pleasure in. He has fenced it round, he has gathered out the stones from it, and he has planted it with the choicest vines.

Separated from an idolatrous, self-adoring world: drawn round, as it were, with the compass of his most holy word, as far as the light of truth has in its spirit reached, the Redeemer has appropriated to himself a people under the appellation of Christians, to worship him, and love him, and as far as in their weak humanity they can, to follow in his footsteps. He has left this fair garden under no ordinary culture. He knows that the soil he made it from is ever what it was, disposed to bear the brier and the thorn, that choke the goodly produce of his care. But what could have been done more for it, that he has not done? The mid-day of gospel truth shines on it; the most holy precepts, and most sanctifying doctrines, are shown forth in it. Like the light dews of the morning that fall, we see not whence, the Holy Spirit sheds its influence on the heart. The sweetest hopes and richest promises are whispered abroad for our encouragement. The result is, in some respects, what we might expect it to be. It is true that sin springs up every hour in the corrupted bosom, but it is not left to flourish there unchecked. A purer morality takes place of nature's blindness: a stronger principle comes in aid of nature's weakness. Have we not reason then to be more startled, and more concerned, if, in walking through this cultured ground, we meet with wrongs that should not flourish there? Is it there we must be cautious of the thistles and the briars that prick and entangle us at every step; and walk as insecurely as among those who know no better guide than their own perverted will? It

should not be: but it is so, in one respect at least: there is one evil to which Christianity puts no stop; even real, vital, spiritual religion, as far as I have seen, puts no stop to it; with some few, very few, individual exceptions.

So much have I said in introduction, the better to excuse the earnest offence I have taken against what is commonly treated as a jest. To say I listened is superfluous here: for whether you will hear or whether you will forbear, it is impossible to escape the sound—Slander, Evil speaking,—what shall I call it, for it has many names? From one end of society to the other, among the grave and the gay, the wise and the foolish, where shall you escape? You might as well live on the ocean's edge, and say you will not listen to the breaking of the waters. We *must* hear it, and we have heard it so long, that I fear we have lost all idea of guilt attached to it. And most of all, I fear that our children cannot escape the infection, but must grow up with the same habits of doing insensibly and without reflection, what their mothers and grandmothers have done before them. It is for their sakes, if not directly addressed to them, I have chosen the subject. The thistle may be eradicated when it first springs up; but let it root itself, let it get firm possession of the soil, and the task becomes difficult, if not impossible.

Evil speaking—I prefer that word to others, because it includes truth as well as falsehood—pervades every sort of society: the only variation is in the different sort of things, people amuse themselves with saying of each other. In a frivolous, fashionable, polite circle, I observe it has regard to things external; to the persons, fortunes, pedigree, and connexions of its subjects. Somebody's grandfather was something that he should not have been; or, at

least, that he had rather not have been, if he could have helped it. Somebody has by no means so much fortune as he seems to have, and some are guilty of having lived more years than any body supposes. Those who sing cannot sing, and those who dance, cannot dance; and somebody's nose is the wrong shape, and somebody's hair is the wrong colour, and one lady's diamonds are paste, and another lady's plate is borrowed. One is ostentatious because she talks too wisely; another is weak, because she talks too foolishly. It may be there is not much harm done; for no one charges the other with any wrong, precisely because they do not care whether she commits it or not: their estimate of evil makes their evil speaking idle rather than injurious.

In a society a little more rational, as if the rank weed flourished the better where the soil is better; it is the character, the conduct, the vital interests of life that are invaded. Every fault exposed, every luckless word repeated; thoughts, motives, and feelings ascribed, where the plain act was all that could be known. This is bad enough; for it loosens the bonds of kindness between man and man; it excites prejudices and suspicions; wounds the feelings and affects the earthly interests; but this is not the worst. There is a sort of society we usually call religious, or serious society; company, that is, from which the mention of God and our eternal interests is not excluded as impolite discourse, nor shunned as a melancholy topic; where right and wrong are what God approves and disapproves; where, when earth is spoken of, heaven is not forgotten, and when wrong is mentioned, sin before God is meant.

Is it possible the weed can flourish here? Alas! it is here it has its most bitter, its most cruel growth; for the subjects of slander here are life and death,

eternal life and death eternal. The sinner whom God spares and waits for, a fellow-sinner scoffs at and despises. The stain that Jesus washes with his tears, a fellow-sinner eagerly exposes; the penitent bosom that Heaven has comforted, has every wound made to bleed afresh by the taunts and the whispers of his fellows. They, whom for their Saviour's sake, the Father has declared he will not judge, on earth, are more hardly judged than any, by those who stand alike condemned, and alike obtaining mercy. The errors and inconsistencies the Almighty bears with, men pronounce at once to be decisive. The axe which mercy has suspended yet another and another year, and Jesus in heaven, perhaps, is even now entreating should be withheld another year, to these, man would lay instantly to the root of the unfruitful tree. Do we say that no real Christian does so? Real Christians—God forbid that I should think them otherwise!—say it: and if their words be so adverse to their meaning, as I hope they are, is it not time they were better suited?

4. We are not here speaking of what those who say it know to be false; that is a crime that bears another name: and though, under one false colouring and another, it veils its blackness oftener than it should, no one under its right name, will venture to defend it. We have spoken of this elsewhere. Our subject is of that manner of evil speaking in which we believe what we say to be true. People are apt to think there is no harm in saying what we know to be true: but let them be aware that the things we know are very, very few: what we think, believe, conjecture, or hear, we can by no means be said to know. I may know that a person did such an act, or said such a word: in saying that he did so, therefore, I cannot risk a falsehood; but if I add

one thing more ; if I ascribe a motive, a cause, an intention, a feeling, to that word or deed, I cannot know that what I say is truth ; for these are things that can be certainly known but to God himself.

If I speak against another in their character and disposition, I may have very good grounds for my decision, and the best I can have ; but it does not amount to knowledge. For instance, I hear a person say one thing to-day and the contrary to-morrow, and I presume myself justified in saying she is false and insincere. By no means ; it may arise from an instability of character, a rapid transition of feeling, or uncertainty of judgment ; which, though a great weakness, is not the vice with which I charged her. We know that the same disease will not show itself by the same symptoms, in different constitutions ; neither do resembling symptoms always imply a similar disease. So the act, that with us would be the result of one feeling, in another mind may be the result of a very different one. And alas ! we do not even know our own hearts ; we are deceived in every movement, in every motive and affection of our bosoms. How then can we persuade ourselves we know what is passing in another ?

But suppose our evil speaking be truth—certain, indisputable truth. Are we justified ? Say, first, whether you have never done the thing you desire to conceal ; never said the thing you would blush to hear repeated : never thought the thought you would not for worlds that any one should read. If never, then go and tell the worst you know, say the worst you think, of all around you. There is One in heaven who knows : He hath said, “ With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again : ” but never mind, zealous propagator of the truth—go

on to tear away the veil with which your neighbour tries to hide his faults: the time is not far distant, when, if some one veils not yours, the rocks and mountains will not serve you for a covering; and truth will be sufficient to prove you deserving of everlasting misery.

Yet this is not all. God is taking account of something mortals overlook. What was your motive for that injurious truth you told this morning? For that remark you made to another's prejudice, too true to be disputed? You will say you had no bad motive: but did you consider before you spoke, whether you had or not? It will not do to run a risk in this. While you are keeping the register of others' faults with so much justice, there is One more just than you, who registers your thoughts, and every secret motive of your heart. Jealousy is sin: envy is sin: strife is sin: unkindness, retaliation, anger, hatred, variance; all are sins: nay, evil speaking itself is declared in holy writ to be so. Will you risk the accumulation of sin upon your soul, and swell the dark catalogue that is against you, for the mere sake of setting the characters of men in their proper light, and undeceiving every body as to their neighbours' actions?

That those who make light of sins in themselves, and sport of it in others, should do this, we need not so much wonder. But to return again to those who call themselves religious, distinctively from a careless and unbelieving world. You know, or pretend to know, the extent of nature's corruption; you bewail before Heaven your inability to conquer it: you may sometimes feel there is absolutely no good in you. How then can you venture to appoint yourselves the judges of your fellow-creature, and take delight in exposing and talking of their faults?

Do you not know the difficulty of conquering one native and deep-rooted sin? Do you not know the tears a Christian sheds in secret, for the sins he cannot conquer? Do you not know that the path of life is dangerous, and full of temptations, we have not in ourselves the power to resist? And yet you go on criticising, censuring, exposing one another; whispering from house to house of this person's inconsistencies, and that person's neglects; and one should not do this, and another should not say that. Oh! it is little, little indeed, with all your profession, you know of your own heart, or it would surely find you other work.

If you think any one is more undeserving in the sight of God than you are, you have a step downward yet to make, ere you reach the place of safety at your Saviour's feet: and when you come there, whatever God, who reads all hearts, may think, you who read only your own, will believe that it is worse than any other. And, Oh! if you did really know, so well as you profess to do, the agony of conscious sin to one who hates it; you would not, by your hard speeches, add one feather's weight to the intolerable burden. Would you have mocked at Peter when he denied his Lord? When Paul besought relief for the weakness that exposed him to Satan's influence, and was denied, would you have reproached him with it? Yes, you would; but remember that your Saviour did not.

If such is the evil, where is the remedy? What the best principle cannot exterminate, may seem to admit of none. Take up the thistle before it has taken root too deeply. Where there is not a malicious love of mischief in the heart, which I trust is very seldom, we speak evil because we always have done so, and because we have always heard it done.

Let the young be watchful against the habit, and resist the example. To assist them in this, the first thing is to induce a habit of thinking as well of others as they can; for those who think no evil will say none. You hear something you are disposed to blame; but you may have misconstrued the words. The speaker may have used stronger expressions than he was aware of; he may have regretted them as soon as spoken. Accustom yourself to such reflections as these. You see, or are told of an action you disapprove: perhaps there was some reason for it no one knows; some temptation, that at least extenuates it; some mistake that led to it. Try to believe so.

You are shocked by defects and vices of character in others: say to yourself, ere you condemn, some neglect of education, some bad example, some physical disorder, or mental imbecility, may have caused all this: you will be in no hurry to speak the worst, while you are thus endeavouring to think the best; and it will besides keep you in better humour with your fellow-creatures, and consequently more amiable in your deportment towards them. The next thing is to accustom yourself to watch your own actions, and the secret movements of your own heart, and to lay by the account of them. Then, when you are disposed to censure, there will come the thought, "I once felt that evil passion too; I remember when I committed the same fault; I have not that wrong propensity; but then I have this other, which is quite as bad." This habit will make you humble: and whatever makes you humble, will make you lenient. Another preventive is to store your mind with other matters, and provide yourself with better things to talk about; for it is the want of mental occupation that makes us so busy with other men's matters, and

the want of something to say, that makes us speak so much evil of each other. Let those who would resist this habit, consider the difficulties, the dangers, the sorrows, that lie in the path of all to their eternal home ; the secret pangs, the untold agonies, the hidden wrongs. Thus the heart will grow soft with pity towards our kind. "How can I tell what that person suffers ? That fault will cost him dear enough without my aid." Thus you will fear, by a hard word, to add to that which is too much already, as we shrink from putting the finger on a sore. And lastly, accustom yourselves to entreat Heaven for your fellow-creatures : asking pardon and forbearance of God, towards what is wrong in them. Then I am sure you will not be eager to expose, and hasty to condemn them. Strenuously accustom yourself to all these things from your childhood upward, and it may be, that the disgraceful thistle will not grow.

MARGARET LINN.

—————There are some
 Who look for nothing in the time to come,
 Nor good nor evil, neither hope nor fear,
 Nothing remains or cheerful or severe.

* * * * *
 Leave her, and let us her distress explore,
 She heeds it not—she has been left before.

CRABBE.

My young readers have often complained to me that I tell no stories. They might as well complain that the baker sells no sugar-plums, and the draper deals not in trinkets; all very good things in themselves; but of that of which there is enough, there needs no supply of ours. Yet, lest my young friends should believe I think it wrong to write a story; or that I cannot write one, I intend, for once, to conciliate their favour, and compound a story; which, contrary to the ordinary practice of story-tellers, I beg to assure them is *not true*. This is a bold assertion. Am I going to lay aside my office, and ceasing to listen to the realities of life, take an imaginary flight among things that neither are nor can be? Most surely not. The skilful lapidary finds his jewels in the mine, shapes them and sets them, and the work is his; but still the stones are real, and on their reality depends the value of his work. So have I sought in nature the materials of my fiction: it is made up of truth, though in itself not true. I tell nothing that I have not heard and seen, though not

in the form in which I give it. I listened for my materials before I wove my tale.

One of the hottest days of an English July, about the hour at which it is usual to set out for a summer-evening's walk ; when the soil had been pulverized by fifteen hours of sunshine, and the light breeze departing with the sun, had left the atmosphere more suffocating than by day—excepting so far as a sensation of dampness might persuade one it was cool—I too went out to walk, because others did ; though I could not but observe in the dusty hue and dragging gait of all I met, an intimation that all would rather be at home, if they knew what to do with themselves there. The grass was damp, and the paths were dusty ; and I was obliged at last to betake myself to the sea-beach, which as all men know, is not the most easy walking in the world ; so that I was just beginning to consider how far it was really agreeable to walk on a summer evening, when my attention was withdrawn from myself by the appearance of a squalid child at my side. It is impossible to imagine an object more uninteresting and loathsome. The vulgar ugliness of her features seemed rather the result of misery, starvation, and ill-humour, than of natural deformity ; her originally fair skin was burnt and freckled into fiery redness ; and her once pale hair, clotted into unequal shades of darkness by dirt and exposure. Her size bespoke her about seven years old ; but her shrivelled form and the worn expression of her countenance, gave to her person an unnatural appearance of age. I looked at her a few moments ; she seemed to be doing nothing, thinking nothing, and feeling nothing ; and questioning within myself what might be the use, or aim, or object of existence, in such a being, I addressed her with the usual question of what

was her name. She deigned me no reply, but sufficiently intimated by her looks, that she took it to be no business of mine. I tried again, by asking where she lived. At this she impertinently laughed, but still returned no answer; and carelessly throwing a stone or two into the water, turned her back and walked off. My curiosity was now excited, and I determined to follow her. This was no easy matter to my patience, for she clung round every post she came to; paused to throw the gravel, or make faces at every dirty child she met: and put her hand through the railing of every garden, to tear away the flowers, which she immediately scattered. At last she stopped at much such a dwelling as I might have expected, a miserable hovel close to the high road, partly formed of the shattered remnant of a boat; the dwelling contained a single room, with a door standing open, a low mud chimney, and a small window without glass, of which the wooden shutter was already closed, or probably had not that day been opened.

My guide entered; and to her astonishment, and apparently no great satisfaction, so did I. In one corner, or rather one half of the hovel, was a sort of bedstead, without bed or mattress, on which lay the figure of a woman; nothing beneath her but a threadbare blanket, or above her, but a sort of ragged coverlet, of which it was impossible, through the dirt, to discern the colour or texture. There was in her features what had been, and that but recently, both youth and beauty; yet now they were haggard, harsh, and almost ghastly. She looked at me, but made no motion of surprise or pleasure, nor gave the least expression of civility. "You seem ill, good woman?" I said. "Yes," she replied, "and please God I shall soon be worse."

I was much struck with her manner of speaking these words, totally free from the coarse, broad accent of the country people in these parts; yet strongly marked by a deathly hollowness of voice, and the reckless daring of a hardened heart. "Is death, then, desirable to you?" I said. "What cannot be worse may be better, they say," she answered.

"But may not your case be worse," I answered, "in the world of which you know not yet the"——

She interrupted me with a long "Ay!" that at once announced the carelessness and the impatience of one who listens to an old story, of which the interest is past.

I scarce knew how to proceed. I took a seat that had not been offered me, and drawing it close to her bed, attempted to put as much kindness as I could into my voice and manner, while I questioned her of her illness and condition. She showed no unwillingness to communicate; but still there was a hardened despondency in all her answers, that seemed to reject assistance or consolation; and, to my assurance that I would give her any thing she needed, she only replied with indifference, "Ay, I dare say you will: I shall not want any thing long."

She replies to me, I thought, as to one who has done her wrong; but that is impossible. Willing to try another point, I reverted to the child, and asked if it was her only one. "Ay, please God!" she answered again.

"My friend," I said, "that word is often in your mouth, but it does not seem to me that you hold it in much reverence."

"As much as others, belike," the woman answered. Again there was something in her tone, which implied, that, however bad she might be, she did not consider me any better.

"Has that child of yours no employment? Does she not go to school?"

"She may do what she can when her mother is gone," said the wretched woman, with some emotion; "and I suppose they will teach her what they taught me."

I was inexpressibly moved by this first symptom of feeling. I had observed, too, a delicacy of person and a correctness of expression, that belied the stern ruggedness of her voice and manner: and I was determined to know more. "It does not seem to me, good woman, that you have always been in this situation; have you been always so badly off?"

"Never till I deserved it," she answered, while an almost convulsive agony distorted every feature, and her eyes grew liquid with tears, which no mention of her sufferings or her wants had before extracted.

"I should like to know your story," I replied;—"There is One above who is the sinner's friend, and who"——

"He is not mine!" she eagerly subjoined, "nor ever has been, since"——

"Since you neglected Him and broke his laws? but perhaps now, if you"——

"Ay, ay!" said the woman, with her former sullen air, "you need not tell me about that. They taught me all that; but they did not mind it, and I did not mind it: and," looking steadfastly in my face, "you do not mind it, I dare say."

This woman, thought I, is neither ignorant, thoughtless, nor unfeeling. Some deep-rooted memory of wrong; some fatal impression from past events, remains upon her mind, and makes her what she is: and I determined to pursue my inquiry, till I traced her story and her sufferings to their

source. I visited her often, and gained her confidence, and by degrees extracted from her the following melancholy tale, which I give, as in her own simple words, though not all at once, and in the exact order, received from her :—

“ My name was Margaret Linn. My father kept a little shop at the corner of High street, and he had no child but me. The farthest I can remember is, that he taught me on the Sunday evening the Lord’s Prayer and the Belief, which he told me was my religion ; and for what he called my learning ; for having but one child, and being well to do in the world, he was determined I should have both ; he sent me to a day-school in the next street, for which he paid sixpence a-week, being twopence more than the schools to which most of my acquaintance went ; and this, of course, made me a greater person than they. But this was not my only distinction ; I had a clean coloured frock twice a-week, wore white stockings, and had my shoes blacked every morning ; for my father said his child should be always decent, though she wore no finery. There was not in the town of H—— so happy a child as Margaret Linn, nor one so envied. My sense of superiority gave me a feeling of high responsibility for my conduct. I would not, for the world, have been heard to use an evil word, or have been seen playing in the streets ; neither should it ever be said that I tore my books or puckered my work : these were accidents that befell all beside, but never could be charged to Margaret Linn, the boast of the mistress, and the pride of the school.

“ When I was twelve years old, my mother suggested that it was time I had learned to be useful. I was accordingly kept at home, to clean the house, and pick the poultry ; but that I might not lose my

learning and my religion, I was allowed to attend a Sunday-school, superintended by some excellent ladies in the parish. Here I was equally distinguished above my fellows. I never came too late, I never wore flowers in my bonnet, whispered at church, or forgot the next. Every lady took notice of my good manners, said kind things to me, and, what was of more consequence, took great pains in instructing me. I could read my Bible well, but I had hitherto never understood its meaning, nor indeed had ever supposed it had a meaning. Those kind ladies explained it all to me, and especially the ten commandments, which I had been taught to repeat by heart. And some things they told me, I remembered, alas! when—but I shall come to it. And so I grew up, the neatest, quietest, and civillest girl, as they said, of all the school; and when at fifteen, my parents said it was time I should go out to service, there was quite a dispute among the ladies who should have me. I was fixed at last in a family of respectability in the town, of which some of the ladies had interested themselves about the school; and I was not a little satisfied with the persuasion that I should continue to be bettered by their precepts and example. It was my place to attend on the ladies, and sometimes help to wait at table, and answer the bell: and most happy still was I in the approbation and kind treatment I met with: and every night when I went to bed—for I had been taught now from whom all good things come—I gave thanks to God for the fair portion he had allotted me on earth.

“While I was in this situation, there came one day a single rap at the door, which I opened: a woman presented herself; and with a mysterious air, and sort of under tone, drew from beneath her apron

a bundle, which she gave me, and bade me take it to the ladies; but not let any body else see it. I hesitated, for I remembered that when I was at the Sunday-school, the ladies taught me whatever needed concealment was likely to be wrong. The woman, seeing my hesitation, whispered with a significant look, 'Some silks, ma'am, some silks—you'll please to show them to the ladies.' Not having any reason to give why I should not, I did as I was bidden, and conveyed the parcel up stairs, rather anticipating a reproof, though I knew not why. The ladies spread the contents of the bundle on the table, and eagerly spoke about their quality: and very soon I was ordered to ask the woman in. I now understood the matter: to every fault found with the texture, or the price, the woman answered that they were French; though from the frequency of the question, it was evident the ladies did not themselves know whether they were or not. It just came once into my mind that these ladies used to tell us it did not signify whether our gowns were coarse or fine, so they were neat and becoming our station: yet now it seemed of great importance to them whether the silk were French or English, though they could not tell which it was when they saw it: but when I recollected that to be sure they were ladies, and I was a servant, and that might make a great difference. At last some purchases were made, and the woman once more placed the bundle under her apron. The ladies asked if she was not afraid to carry it, and what she would do if she met any one. 'You'll be pleased ma'am,' she said, 'to let this young woman put me out at the back door; and just look that no one is about, and tell the other servants that I came about some old clothes from your ladyships, if they should see my

bundle, just.' To my great surprise the ladies assented. Never before had I heard them assent to a falsehood, or connive at a deception : but then they knew best : and it was no business of mine. Happily on seeing her, I escaped the falsehood I was desired to tell.

"I waited that day at table ; there was some company ; and the subject of the morning purchases was brought up. A gentleman asked the ladies if they felt no scruple upon the subject of smuggling ? They replied that they did not see any harm in it. 'And pray, ma'am,' said the gentleman, 'do you see any harm in stealing ?' I thought of the eighth commandment. The lady smiled assent.—'And may I ask you what is stealing ?' I thought I could have answered that, for they had told me often enough in explanation, that it was taking that which belonged to another : and now they replied something to the same purpose. 'And may I further ask, is the duty you evade, or the revenue you lessen, by the purchase of smuggled goods, your own or another's ?' The ladies replied, that defrauding the government was not the same as defrauding an individual. The gentleman asked in what part of the law of God such a distinction was made or intimated. The ladies could not point out such a passage, and I could not myself think of one ; but I supposed there might be, since I was sure they knew the Scripture better than I. Some one said she did not see why a portion of the profit of manufactured goods, should belong to the government. 'You know, madam, probably, why this house and grounds belong to you.'—'Because they belonged to my father, and therefore are mine by natural right.'—'I beg your pardon ; by natural right every thing belonged to him who took it first ; and there are places and have been times,

when your father's property would not be yours.'—
'But now it is mine by law.'—'Exactly so: and he would commit theft who should deprive you of it. By law, the profits of the revenue are another's, and not yours; and pardon me, you commit theft if you appropriate it to yourself, or in any way deprive the rightful claimant.'—'But these laws are oppressive and injurious, and ought to be repealed.'—'That admits a difference of opinion: but at present it is law; and if every one may break the law that does not please him, there is not a malefactor in the kingdom but may say the law that condemns him is a bad one.' I did not understand any part of this reasoning: but I concluded, that as my ladies were so very good, they most likely were right, and that there could be no harm in smuggling. One of them said that to be sure it might not be quite right, and that in the purchase of spirits, tea, &c., where it was only to save the duty, she should hesitate to smuggle; but in articles that could not lawfully be purchased at all, she was obliged to do it. 'Certainly,' replied the gentleman, 'if it is more necessary to you to wear French silk than to do right.' I opened my ears wide at this: for I remembered how many times I had been told, it never could be necessary to do wrong; that to do right was the most important of all things; and by the very lady too, who now said she must do what she allowed was not quite right, because she wanted a certain sort of dress. But it was not for me to be wiser than my betters. The dinner was ended, and I left the room, and excepting when I repeated the eighth commandment, or saw French silk now and then by chance, I do not remember that I thought any more about what I had heard, till the sad days that I am going to tell of

“Meantime my years went on. The ladies liked me, and made me presents, and increased my wages : and in all the house it was who but Margaret Linn. And now I began to save a little money, besides buying myself now and then a good book, such as my mistress recommended me, over and above a prayer-book with gilt edges, and a large-print Bible. And when my mother fell sick and died, I was able to buy for her many little comforts she had not got, besides sitting often by her bed, and explaining the Bible to her as it had been explained to me. Many, and many were the times she said it was a comfort to her deathbed that her Margaret had turned out so well and sure it was a comfort to me to hear her say it ; and many times I gave thanks to God for all his mercies : for I knew it was He who had made me what I was ; and with all my heart I praised him that I was Margaret Linn and nobody else : little did I then think what I should come to.

“By this time I was twenty years of age ; and as comely a young woman, so they said, as any in the parish. I had a great many suitors ; but I always consulted my ladies about them, and they generally persuaded me not to marry, because, as they said, I was better off. I thought so for a while ; but at last I began to think the time was getting on, and I had better settle myself ; so I was married, one midsummer day, to a young man who had been a gardener in a gentleman’s family ; and having saved a little money, was going to take some ground, and raise fruit and vegetables for the market. To be sure he had not quite so much learning as I had ; and having never been to a Sunday-school, he did not so well understand his Bible and Catechism ; but he was honest, sober, and industrious and loved his church, and bore a very good character ; and my

mistresses said if I wished to marry, I could not do better : and he was besides a very good-looking young man. We were married, and all the ladies went to church with us, and we had great feastings, and crowds of lookers on ; and all the parish knew it was Margaret Linn's wedding.

" And now I was surely happier than I had ever been before ; and I wondered how God should never be tired of blessing me. I had a little cottage in the garden which was all my own. It is true my kitchen was not so good as that I had left at my mistress's ; nor my fire so bright, nor my bed so soft, nor my table so plentifully spread ; but then it was my own. And it is true I worked harder, for I had more to do, than to walk up and down stairs, and wait upon the ladies ; but then I worked for myself and those I loved, and not for hire. And who does not know the difference ? And who ever looked back from the little that is her own, to the much that was not hers ? The rich leavings of my mistress's table were never so sweet to my taste, as the pork I had salted for myself, and the cabbage that grew in my own husband's garden. I had children—ah ! and brave children were they too, as ever mother's eyes have looked upon : as straight, as beautiful : their white hair curled upon their heads : their eyes"—

Here the wretched woman's voice began to falter, the tears chased each other rapidly down her ghastly cheeks ; her eyes wandered towards the corner where her unsightly offspring was skulking, as if to make a comparison between what she remembered and what she saw—but it was all too much. an agony of unutterable feeling convulsed her frame, and for that time closed her narrative.

As the unfortunate woman was enabled from time

to time to renew her story, the following was its melancholy purport:—

“My husband cultivated most industriously his little garden; and for a time it seemed to answer to his toil. The peas and beans he raised, I gathered and carried to market. I weeded his beds, and I watered his strawberries; and when he grumbled at the prospect of a bad crop, I told him the times and the seasons were with the Lord, and that we should be content: for so I had been taught while I was young. When Saturday night came, we reckoned up our gains, and saw what we had taken above what our rent and our expenses came to; and it was always enough, saving now and then a little, to live on for the next week. And light were our hearts, and glad were our bosoms, on the Sabbath day that followed such a reckoning; what remained to us was our own—it was all we wanted for that week; and before the next the cherries would be ripe, or the potatoes would be fit for digging; or something would be sure to come in, to supply our daily necessities. And so we went on, and so we prospered, for a year or two. But God was tired of us, or we were tired of Him; or he knew, as well he might, that we only served him while he blessed us, and should disobey him as soon as things went wrong. Some way or other, our fortune took a turn. My husband had a long illness, and was obliged to hire a man to keep his garden; and then, when the doctor's bill came in, we did not exactly know how to pay it, and sold off all the potatoes we were used to keep for winter, when they would fetch better prices. And when winter came we had not the potatoes to take to market; and so on Saturday night there were no profits, and we were obliged to live on credit all the week. And when summer came again there

was an old score to pay off; and it was a bad year for gooseberries, and my children had the measles. The next winter was worse than the last: the rent was behindhand: and to be sure it did grieve my foolish heart, when Easter Sunday came, and my children could not have their new bonnets, as they were used to do, and their mother before them. But oh! I was happy then—happy when worse befell—when the rent could not be paid; and the garden was to be given up, and the furniture was to be sold: and my own little cottage, and the roses I had planted, and the honeysuckles I had trained, and all my fine things were to pass over to another. Oh! I was happy even then, to what I was in the times that came after, for then it was no fault of mine.

We got into a hut by the roadside: my husband went out to day-work, and I earned now and then a shilling or so, one way or another; and when we might have wanted bread, there came often to my door a lady that had known me in my better days, and gave me a shilling for old friends' sake, bidding me trust to Providence. Thus even here we did not much amiss, if we had but been contented. But it happened one day—oh! luckless woman that should live to see that day!—we had been more short of money than usual: to spare my husband's meal at night, I had not eaten any thing myself that day; the children's frocks were getting very ragged, and I had not the means to buy them new ones. I was just folding them up after putting the children to bed, and my wicked heart was getting ready to murmur against God, when a handsome carriage stopped in the road before my door; two ladies, richly dressed, alighted from it, and desiring the coachman to drive about, advanced to the door of my poor dwelling. I could not directly guess what

they wanted, for they were strangers; and they looked about them more as if they came to do some harm than any good: so I curtsied, and waited till one of them, still looking behind her, asked if I did not sell gloves? I told her no, for that to be sure was a plain case. She still hesitated, as if she did not believe me, and said she had been directed to this cottage. I then recollected there was a cottage further up the row, where some people lived who were known to be smugglers; and though I had never had any acquaintance with them, I supposed they might sell gloves, and answered the lady accordingly, pointing out the house; but surely, as I yet held in my hands my children's ragged frocks, I did wish I had something to sell that they would like to buy.

The ladies went away, and, alas! my foolish woman's heart went after them, and in my wicked curiosity, I resolved to see what they were going about: so I followed under pretence of showing the way, and loitered about the casement to listen. Dozens by dozens the gloves were produced, and this pair and that pair were chosen, till there was quite a pile of them: and then out came the silks, and the shawls, and the stockings; and, after all, out came the money; and many a golden piece glittered on the table, and many a bank-note was unfolded. And whilst my eyes rested upon them wishfully—'One of those single bits of gold,' I thought, 'would serve my hungry babes with food for many and many a day, and replace the ragged frocks besides.' The ladies went away, and so did I—they to their carriage, and I to my hovel. But if their hearts were at rest, mine was not: envy and discontent were awakened in my bosom; my children were asleep, and my husband was not come home;

I set about to get his scanty supper, and for the first time in my life found no heart for the task. For the first time, since I came into it, I left the floor of my house unswept, and my children's tea-cups unwashed; and sat down to ruminate upon what had passed. The silks and the gloves and the gold and the notes were running in my head. 'It is no wonder,' I said, 'that Dame Willum's children are better dressed than mine, since money comes in so fast. Yet Dame Willum never toils as I do; and her husband is not sober and industrious as mine is; and if the world says true, neither one nor the other is any better than they should be.' I knew that Dame Willum's husband was a noted smuggler, and a very bad man, and therefore I need not have envied them their riches; but evil was in my heart, and the tempter was surely at my elbow: I never thought of this, but began to consider of the advantage of being a smuggler, and having plenty of money to receive.

Conscience was not altogether silent, for I had always considered smugglers as a bad set of people; but then if there was no harm in smuggling, they need not be more wicked than others. And now, though it was many years ago, it came into my head, as naturally enough it might, what I had once heard and seen in my mistress's house, in those happy days, every moment and every circumstance of which was written in my grateful recollection. My ladies had said there was no harm in smuggling; my ladies had bought smuggled goods; what was I, that I should esteem myself wiser than they? Had they not taught me to fear God and understand his commandments, and would they be doing wrong?

"I had just settled this point to my satisfaction, or rather to my inclination, when my husband came

in. He looked a little surprised at the disorder of the house, and my sitting idle ; but he was a quiet man, so he said nothing, and sat down to his supper. Having waited a little while in patience, he said, 'Margaret, where's the Bible?'—for ever since we were married, and that was many a year now, I had gone on as my ladies first persuaded me to begin, with reading a chapter in the Bible to him every night after he ate his supper. I took the book down—but, alas! though I was not conscious of it, the Bible and I were no longer of a mind. What wonder, then, I felt but ill-disposed to read it. I turned over the leaves : I could not find my place—I lost it again as soon as I found it. At last I got through a few verses, but it would not do : my thoughts were elsewhere ; and closing the book,— 'James,' I said, 'Dame Willum's children have food while mine are starving.' He looked amazed, and well he might ; for never, in all our troubles, was he used to hear the language of complaint from me. 'Our children, Margaret, have eaten the bread of honesty ; and though it has been sometimes but a hard morsel, they have thrived upon it, and no man can say they robbed him to come at it.'

'There are wiser in the world,' said I, 'than we, who do not take smuggling to be so much a sin.'

'Belike there may,' said James, who was not much a man for arguing, 'but I have thanked God often that I am no smuggler ; and I do not suppose any smuggler ever thanked God that he was one.'

'But our children are getting older, and they should have some schooling—and if the free trade is an honest one'——

'I pretend to no learning, Margaret, but a trade that brings men to the prison and the gallows, is not apt to be an honest one.'

‘But I know those that think the law has no right to take men up for such things, and’——

‘Tis like enough it hasn’t—but I do not see what good that would be to me, if I were in prison, and could not get out.’

‘One might as well be in prison,’ said I, ‘as living in this hut with our poor children, ragged and starved about us, and we without the means to feed and clothe them.’

“And so we left talking for that time, and went to bed. They who remember the first step in some wilful sin, may know how I went to sleep that night; and they who know what it is to have a wrong purpose in the bosom, with a determination to pursue it, may know how I felt when I awaked. In my dreams I saw a strange confusion of things: sometimes the golden pieces glittering on my table; sometimes the vessel tossed upon the waters, and my husband struggling with the waves. Gloves, silks, prisons, chains, coaches, constables, and fine-dressed ladies—all jumbled themselves together in my fancy. Never, never, till then, had I known such slumbers or such a wakening. And well they might be such; for my days of honesty and innocence were gone!”

When the wretched woman reached this part of her narrative, her whole voice and manner changed. In telling the story of her better days, she seemed to have recalled the spirit of them. Her voice was gentle and subdued, her manner simple and affecting; and the tears that fell from time to time, might well have passed for those of chastened and penitential sorrow. It was but a passing impression, arising from the recollection of early happiness. Now her face resumed its sternness, her voice its bold and reckless daring—the tear no longer fell; but in its place there was an agonized expression in

her eye too wild almost to be looked on without a shudder.

With a view to still her increasing vehemence, "Margaret," I said, "your sin was doubtless great, but you did not then know the wrong, or foresee the consequence of your advice."

"Ma'am," said the woman, eagerly, "I did know, I did foresee. But for me, he had been now an honest man. He knew I had more learning than he, and always believed what I said: he knew how religiously I had been educated; and that I had known something about God and the Bible before he thought of either, and he did not think I should tell him wrong. It was I who persuaded him. I sent him into the company that corrupted him. I sent him to pass his nights on the wild ocean. I sent him to his death; and perhaps—but there at last I shall go too, and share the mischief I have done him." I entreated the woman to proceed calmly with her story; for I saw it needed a stronger power than mine to whisper peace to such a bosom. She proceeded—

"I did not accomplish my purpose all at once, but from time to time I renewed the subject. Whenever we were short of food, I said I knew where it was to be had! Whenever I saw Dame Willum's brats, I said they were better off than mine, though I knew the contrary. Sometimes, indeed, when the wind blew loud all night, my heart misgave me; and sometimes, when I was reading the Bible, my conscience smote me. But I would not feel, I would not hear, and at last I accomplished my purpose. James was a strong, and a brave man; some way or other my foolish talking was heard among the neighbours, and those engaged in the trade came and persuaded and tempted him. In short—for why need I

prolong my miserable tale?—he became a smuggler: and from that hour the blessing of heaven forsook our dwelling—the eye of God was averted from us; sin took its course; and this is what came of it. But you will hear.

“Things looked well at first: my husband was paid seven or eight shillings a night—my children were dressed; my children were fed. We got a better house, but what was I with all—a miserable, miserable woman! In the long, dark nights, while the wind was blowing and the waves were raging, did I sleep soundly on my comfortable bed, bought with the price of his perils? When the Sabbath day came, and the bells rung, and I dressed my children in their nice, neat clothes, was my heart light as I went forth alone, where he was used to go with me? No—from the first I was a miserable woman, though no one knew it but myself; and it rapidly grew worse. James was not used to the fatigue and exposure of such a service, and his wicked companions persuaded him that he ought to take spirits to carry him through it: habit very soon grew into choice; accustomed to drink when he was out, he chose to drink at home: the coarse and blasphemous language he heard among his desperate companions, he repeated before his wife and children: he laughed at his Bible now, and when I remonstrated with him, he told me if I had believed it myself, I should not have wished him to become a smuggler. Oh! if this had not been so—if he had died as I knew him once, as I once saw him on a bed of sickness—oh, I could have borne it then—but to die so!

“It was then my last child was born; she that is yonder—look at her; she was ugly as her father’s and her mother’s sin, and she has been the torment of our lives: her evil disposition has defeated all our

efforts to control it. She will learn nothing, do nothing, and does not seem to have wit enough to know good from bad; though she has enough, God knows, to get into all the mischief she can find. But the sin is on our heads—she was fed on the bread of iniquity, she heard nothing but oaths and curses from her father and his bad companions; from her mother but fretfulness and reproaches. I had children—but they are gone—my blessings are taken from me, and she is left to be my curse!

“Some years went on in this way; at times we had plenty of money; but as my husband drank and gamed, we were at other times much distressed. One day when he came home rather more sober than usual: ‘Margaret,’ he said, ‘the blood of a fellow-creature is on my hand!’ I shuddered, and so I thought he did; for we had known, we had sometimes felt, the commands of God; we had believed them once, and once had feared to disobey them: and though we had contrived to persuade ourselves that smuggling did not break the eighth commandment, we could not well persuade ourselves that murder did not break the sixth. My husband had killed a man in a fray: and though he was never discovered, he was ever after that as one desperate and careless of what might follow.

“On one occasion my children were sick; we had spent all our money, and I was advised to go to some charitable lady in the town, and ask for nourishment for them. I went, and was conducted to the lady: but as soon as she heard my name, she said my husband was a bad character; my house was a notorious place of drinking and wickedness: and she could not by any means encourage me. I looked at her, for I thought I had seen her once before; but whether I had or not, I whispered, as I walked away

uncomforted, 'if it had not been for you, or such as you, we had never been what we are : ' and I went home with my bosom hardened in sin, and aggravated in wretchedness, by the repulse of those whom I considered as the cause of both. For think not that my first sin had been the only one : no, it is a road on which she who starts is driven forward as with stings and scourges. By degrees I had ceased to go to church or to read at home, because it reminded me of the days that were gone ; I could not bear the recollection ; and I could not bear to see the minister, who used to talk kindly with me, go by me now without notice. I also ceased to teach my children good ; for I feared lest they should compare it with the ill they saw, and I should but be teaching them to hate and despise their parents. Yet did my heart yearn over them as the destined prey of the Evil One, given by their own parents to destruction.

" In one of my better moments, as I looked upon that graceless girl, my heart was moved towards her with pity and with shame, for I had taught her nothing ; and I resolved to make one effort to save her from destruction, by asking for her from others what I could no longer render her myself. I knew the days on which a committee of ladies were to meet for benevolent purposes, especially for the supporting of a school for the poor, and I knew that in this school, the children were carefully and religiously taught. I took my neglected child by the hand and presented myself before them, to ask admission for her into the school : it was the first right thing I had done for many a day, and there was a peace in my bosom it had become but little used to. When I had made my request, I was asked my name, and the occupation of my husband. O that

the time should have come when such questions would bring shame to the cheek of Margaret Linn. I equivocated a little on the latter question, but the ladies understood my language, and told me with some harsh expressions, that my child could not be admitted, as they had many applications, and always gave the preference to those whose parents followed an honest calling.

“My bosom was ready to burst with grief and indignation—yes, indignation—for as I looked round the circle, I saw the smuggled articles about their persons! I knew well enough the gloves on the hands of one, and the handkerchief round the neck of the other: and my child was rejected, cast off, left to ignorance and vice, because her father pursued for subsistence a trade that they encouraged, for the ornament of their persons. With some show of impertinence, which still more confirmed their rejection of me, I was leaving the house, when a lady of a very kind aspect, whispered me that she would call and talk to me about putting the child to school somewhere. But the last spark of good was extinguished in my bosom; the last good purpose I ever formed was repulsed in a way, that completed the hardening of my heart. ‘No,’ I said, as I walked along, scarce knowing where I went, ‘she shall neither go to their schools, nor learn their learning. If she sin, as she will do, it shall be in ignorance and stupidity; they shall not teach her the will of God only to make her more guilty when they afterwards teach her to disobey him. They taught me first the meaning of moral and religious honesty; then they told me by words, and by example, that there was no harm in a secret and unlawful trade: and now that I come to them with the wretchedness in my heart, and the ruin on my head, which were

brought on me by that trade, they reject my supplication; and put scorn upon my guiltless child, because I have pursued it. No—not a child of mine shall go: if she must follow in her mother's course, she shall go there without her feelings: and when the kind lady did, in fact, come and offer to put the child to school at her own expense, I obstinately, and insolently, rejected the offer; and thus made myself guilty of my child's as well as of my husband's ruin.

“But the measure was full and the time was come, and my tale will soon to be told. My eldest boy was now a lad of sixteen: and never since he had come into the world had he made his mother's heart to ache. He was the birth of better days, for he was the first-born child I had. The good impressions of his early years had lasted him through worse ones: he had been to school; and since that he had been to sea in a collier; and in spite of all the ill he heard when he came home, he was ever a good and steady lad. It was some time now that he had been out of employ, and had got a sort of hankering to go out with his father; only, as he said, for a bit of sport, for he was a brave boy, and loved danger and the seas; but he loved his mother better, and he had ever, till then, yielded to her entreaties not to go. One night—yes, that night, that very night—there was rough work to be done, and they wanted hands; there was danger, and they offered high pay. My boy's spirit was roused, his father persuaded him, and when I would have retained him even with tears, my husband said that since I did not care about *his* being drowned or murdered, he did not see why I should make so much ado about the boy. They were the last words he ever spoke to me. They were not true; for in all his wickedness, he had been

kind and affectionate to me; and it was not for me to love him less for sins that I myself had driven him to. They were not true words; but, oh! I remembered them when—Remembered! I remember them now; I hear them in my sleep; I hear them in my dreams; they are whispered about my bed, and about my pillow. Grant, Heaven, they come not after me to the grave.

“They went, and surely something in my heart misgave me of what was coming: for I felt I could not go to bed that night. It was already dark when they went away; and many a time I opened the casement to look out upon the night. The wind howled frightfully; I heard the waves thundering upon the rocks, as if they would have rent the firm earth in pieces; and so dark was it, that when, in my restlessness, I went out to try it, I could not find my way across the road. Not a star was there to be seen in all the heavens, nor a bit of moon to light them on their perilous way—’twas ever such nights as these, they chose to do their boldest deeds. Hour after hour I listened, though I knew not for what, for they were miles away. I shuddered at the silence—I started even at the noise I made myself, as from time to time I threw on a log to keep the fire burning, that they might warm and dry them when they came. I saw my neglected Bible on the shelf, and remembered the time when it would have consoled me—but not now: I remembered when in times of fear and danger to those I loved, I should have betaken myself to prayer; but not now. I could but sit and watch and long for the hours of darkness to be gone. And when they were gone, and the daylight opened, I liked it no better. I looked out upon the damp, cold landscape, and thought it was like my desolated bosom; the very

light was hateful to me; for surely the truth was in my heart; though yet I knew it not.

"The morning grew apace: the people in the surrounding cottages came forth to their honest labours. I saw one and another making ready the breakfast for her husband, and giving a parting word to her boys; but where were mine? Nine o'clock struck, ten, eleven, and still they came not. This was no uncommon thing, but there was a presentiment of evil in my bosom. The clock struck the hour of twelve, when I heard a noise of voices—I went out, and saw a crowd about Dame Willum's door. I knew her husband had been out with the party, and guessed the rest: 'Where is my husband?' I said to the first who would hear me. 'He will be here presently,' said the man, in a sullen tone. I had no more to ask: every body was talking, and every body was eager to tell the worst they could make of the fearful story. All murdered, all drowned, all prisoners! And soon there was not even need to listen, for my eyes beheld the worst—the dead body of my husband, borne upon the shoulders of ruffianly-looking men, whose downcast looks bespoke, that even they felt pity for his fate. And where was my boy? Him the cold waters held, and would not give me back so much as his lifeless body! The smugglers had been attacked in endeavouring to remove their cargo; they resisted; some were slain on the spot; and the rest were drowned in attempting to escape. Who will tell out the story? Who will tell the wife, the mother's agony, when she received of her husband, no more but the disfigured corpse: of her son, not even so much as that! Tell who may, I cannot. But you see me, what I am—I have told you what I was. Want, and disease, and remorse, and agony, have brought me to the grave. What

is beyond, you may know ; I do not—I believed once, now I dare not believe.”

The story is finished. Need I write the moral? If my readers believe I have drawn an exaggerated picture, let them inquire and know. They will not, perhaps, find Margaret Linn upon her death-bed, nor meet her squalid offspring in their evening walk; but they will find more misery resulting from this traffic, than language of mine can picture. They may see, as we have done, the suspected fall under our windows. They may see, as we have done, three or four at a time, the murdered bodies borne into the churchyard; and they may hear, as we do daily, the thoughtless multitude, one moment repeating the melancholy story, the next moment creeping about the lanes and alleys, in search of the venders of forbidden goods. It is for such that I have told the story. The miserable victims of this traffic will not read our pages; nor is it for them, that I have written. They are incapable of appreciating the moral wrong of the traffic itself; the only question to them is the gain and loss, the risk and the inducement; and in this, as in all other sorts of gambling, we know that men will put all they have on the stake, if the prize proposed be large enough. To these poor creatures the inducement is their daily sustenance, the support of their wives and children; that they ruin them eventually is beyond their calculation; for we know, that in exact proportion as the mind is uncultivated, its feelings and cares are limited to the present time. Much, therefore, is to be said in excuse for them. But what is to be said for us? It is the purchaser that makes the trade.

Can we, without compunction, see the lives of our fellow-creatures put to venture; their families

plunged into misery unspeakable ; their morals corrupted ; their souls, it may be, ruined eternally—and all for what ? To save a few shillings which we would freely give to any one who needed it ; or to deck our persons with some prohibited article of dress ? I fully believe, there is not a lady who has a heart to feel, who would not take the costly shawl from her shoulders, and present it to the person whom she could thereby save from such misery as we have described ; though the consequence were, that she should never wear another : and yet we expose to such misery hundreds and thousands of our fellow-creatures : and, and when it is named to us, think it quite enough to say, “ French goods are prohibited, and we must have them, because”—most sufficient reason—“ because we like them best !”

SOCIAL KINDNESS.

THERE WAS somewhere—I need not tell exactly where—a very extensive prison-house, in which immense numbers of persons were confined under suspicion, (for they had not yet been tried,) of manifold misdemeanours, some in the overt act, and others in hidden disaffection towards a government to which they allowed allegiance. From the babbling infant, who had come there for his father's crimes, before himself could have committed any, to the hoary head of age, bowing already to the grave that was waiting to receive him; from the coarse, unthinking peasant, who had followed where others led, to the lofty and commanding spirit, that must answer for many a crime beside his own. Every age was here, and sex and nation—every complexion and condition of mankind were assembled in this vast prison-house, to wait till it should please the sovereign, (for in that country there was no Habeas Corpus Act) to come from his far-distant court, and judge the prisoners for the crimes of which they stood accused.

Around this strange abode, there was a wall too high for any foot to scale, too thick for any one to discover what might be doing beyond it. Within the limit, the imprisoned seemed to walk at large. There was space for all to live and move at ease; but not without perpetually crossing each other's way, and coming in near and frequent contact; and if any would have fled from his fellows, he could

not; for the wall was round him and about him, and he might not pass it. There were paths many, and ways many, but the impervious barrier was the issue of them all, and "no farther," was the fatal check upon their else unrestricted motions. Suspected of unequal crimes, but as yet untried and unconvicted, they were not distinguished from each other by any anticipatory punishments, seeming to suffer promiscuously the hardships, inseparable from their state of durance and disgrace. And not a few, indeed, were these. Famine, and want, and pain, and misery, were there. Some eyes looked upwards in untold despair, as if still to demand of Heaven what it had become impossible to bestow. Some were on the ground in deep despondency, as if they loathed to meet the sunbeam that had shone on scenes now lost to them for ever.

Their very pleasures, when they seemed to flourish most, were but as that baleful tree, very fair to look upon, that drops pestilence and death on all who venture to repose beneath its branches. For while the parent sat, fondly administering to the needs and pleasures of a beautiful family, one by one he saw them sink beneath the hardships of their condition, till there were none remaining. And the bosom that had brought with it all that was needful to its happiness, in sweet possession of which, whatever was suffered was scarcely felt, and whatever was wanting was not missed, was doomed to see the pestilential vapour of the prison arise, and chill to death the frame of its beloved. Industry toiled hard, and sowed its seed, and forgot in labour, as others in pleasure, the dangers of his state: and when he should have reaped the fruit, the winds of heaven, from which his prison-house was all unsheltered, had blighted it, and he was left to want,

Some, who once had friends and families, and homes, sat here apart from all, and laid claim to nothing, and found regard of none; and some, whom all caressed and all bowed down to, and who seemed to abound in every thing, fed secretly on the ashes of affliction, and fasted from all but tears, consumed by memory of something past, or dread of some half-seen future.

The lofty and capacious intellect was there, working its own misery with its own greatness, to which there was nothing to respond, and which nothing in that small space could satisfy. And feebleness, and ignorance, and imbecility, were there also, suffering contempt, neglect, and scorn, for deficiencies not of their own choosing. And though there were some on whose cheek the bloom was fresh, and in whose eye the beam of joy was bright, they were regarded by the more experienced, as but the less conscious victims of as sure a fate: for it was known they could not evade, though they might forget, the consequences of their suspected character. And to all, and to each, besides the unequal sufferings of their actual state, there remained the approaching judgment, to which they were reserved, coming they knew not when, threatening they knew not what; more awful for its uncertainty, more appalling for the obscurity that hung upon the issue.

Does not the question forcibly suggest itself, how would these prisoners conduct themselves towards each other? Involved in one common calamity, standing in the same fearful predicament, compelled, willing or unwilling, to remain together, to take of the same scanty comforts, and abide the same and equal ills—each one liable to whatever the other was enduring, and no one secure from succeeding to his neighbour's wo. How does it seem

they would conduct themselves to each other in this strange condition ; which had brought them together without their leave, and forced them to abide each other's company, without any choice of theirs ? Reason, and common sense, and feeling, nay, and self interest itself, are agreed upon the answer ; kindness, courtesy, and pity, would be the tone of such society. They would not all love each other ; dissimilar habits, uncongenial tempers, varieties of intellect and condition, would make that impossible. They would not all esteem each other : for defect of moral worth in some, in others native imbecility or deformity of character, would render them no objects of esteem. But there would surely prevail in this society a tone of benevolence and courtesy, the result of a participated destiny.

The untried criminal would not begin beforehand the punishment of his fellow-criminals, by treating them according to the measure of their supposed, though yet undecided guilt. However much unlike, no one could stand off from another as a being with whom he had no feelings or interests in common. The common misery, the common danger, would create a fellowship between the most opposite characters, that would claim a word, a look at least of kindness, as they went by each other, or sat down together in the narrow limits of their prison-house. It would seem that one could scarcely have a concern in which the others felt no interest ; a painful feeling that the others would not wish to spare ; a desire the others would not wish to gratify—from sympathy, if not for love ; from pity, if not from esteem. And least of all would those who had most hope of pardon and favour from the sovereign, when he came, look coldly on those with whom it might fare worse. A sense of their own danger would

teach them pity ; and conscious guilt would make them merciful. Here, in short, the wisest would see in the most simple, the noblest in the basest, a being whom if nature had placed apart, suffering and danger had here brought near together.

Some one has wisely said, (our readers may have observed, before now, that we always think that saying wise which agrees with our own opinions,) and beautifully as wisely said, "Courtesy is, strictly speaking, a Christian grace. It is a plant of heavenly origin. This present evil world, like the ground which the Lord hath cursed, is utterly incapable of yielding any thing so good and lovely. Courtesy cannot grow in selfish nature's soil. It is never found but in the garden of God." I had just been reading this very pretty sentence, as quoted for my observation in the letter of a friend, when, passing into society, I happened to hear it boldly asserted that it is not desirable to make ourselves agreeable to those we do not like : and warmly contested that universal courtesy is almost a sin. "So, then," I said within myself, "here are opinions in most determined opposition. The plant that one would cherish, as the very growth of Heaven, the other plucks up and casts away as a noxious and pernicious weed." I had dwelt with pleasure on the former sentiment as true, and just, and beautiful : but what then becomes of the other ? They cannot both be just, or both be true. Yet it seemed to me of some importance, that they who are beginning the business of life, should perceive between the flower and the weed ; and setting myself to consider of the matter, it appeared to me that this world of ours is no other than the prison-house described, and our condition in it that which we

have depicted. How then does it seem that we should behave ?

It has pleased God, for reasons wise, since they are his, to form the inhabitants of earth in moulds so different, that each one cannot assimilate with another. Like ill-accorded instruments, well-tuned perhaps, and perfect in themselves ; but which yet can make no harmony together, because the pitch of one is higher than the other. It has pleased Him, too, to endow our minds with feelings, known and understood by all, though difficult to define ; that draw us towards some persons in preference to others. And while we go by the mass with indifference, bind us with indissoluble affection to some selected few ; for no reason that can be given, but a natural and spontaneous *préférence* : or perhaps some affinity of taste, principles, and pursuits. These selected few, (for however many, they are few in the comparison,) are what we usually call our friends ; and to these, our deportment may be left to other influence, and guided by other rules, than those of general courtesy. But these apart, the larger mass of those with whom we are brought in contact, are persons for whom, to use the common expression, we do not care—we have no choice or preference for them. It is to these that a habit of universal courtesy is, or is not to be cultivated : that we are, or are not to take pains to render ourselves as agreeable and acceptable, as circumstance and higher duty will permit.

We know there is a sinful conformity to the world, that is forbidden ; and whatever that may be defined to be, we beg not to be understood to desire that the line be broken : for God must not be offended that man may be pleased ; and sin must not be committed from any motive of expediency whatever. But ci-

vility, attention, regard to the tastes, and respect for the feelings of others, are not sins. On the contrary, they are the plant that has been asserted to be of Christian growth; a flower of the garden of God. We are aware also that it will be contested that there is a degree of insincerity and deception in assuming an appearance of attention and complacency towards those, for whom we have no regard, nor any kindly feelings. Be it admitted, however, that we ought to have kindly feelings towards every one. Criminals chained to the same galley, slaves fettered and toiling in the same mine, are not more closely conjoined in one common fate: have not more claim upon each other's sympathy, than men, inhabiting together this prison-house of earth. We ought to have a feeling of benevolent interest, for every one of mortal birth. Our aversions, our contempt, our disunion, our animosity; all these things are defects, blemishes, symptoms of mental corruption and disease: and if they cannot be eradicated, we are obliged to any garb of decency, that can contribute to conceal them.

Our Christian perfection would be to have no unkindly feelings towards any one; and the next best thing to this is to be conscious of them, and ashamed of them; and endeavour to conceal them, as we would do a loathsome and unsightly wound; the effort is a self-sacrifice, and will go far to subdue the feeling. It may be asserted again, that a universal desire to please and to oblige, is dangerous to ourselves, as it may be the offspring of vanity, too eager for the approbation of men, and ever seeking its own gratification. It may be so: but in this case it is the motive, not the conduct, that needs to be amended. To pay a courteous attention to those who do not particularly please us; to give satisfac-

tion to those who can give us none; is, as we have observed, a sacrifice of our selfishness that may proceed from the highest tone of Christian principle.

Are we, then, to be as courteous, and to attempt to be as agreeable to those whom we do not admire, or perhaps do not approve, as to those whose qualities and principles claim our esteem and approbation? We need not choose them for our companions, or take them to the confidence of our bosoms; we need not seek them, or desire them: but our house is narrow: the path we go in is straight; the way is crowded; and we must be much in contact: the duties and intercourse of life must bring us into connexion with those whom we did not, and could not choose. And what are we, that we should feel contempt or disregard for any one? If others have their peculiarities, have we not ours? If they have their defects, have we not ours? nay, and our vices too, to answer for which we are all hastening forward to judgment? And in this narrow house of our sojourning, surely every one has a claim to what every one can do to make sweet the bitterness of life. For, oh, there is enough for all to bear. The dwellers in that prison-house were not so happy, that there was no need of each other's courtesy to soften their condition; there was not so much scarcity of suffering, that the conduct of one, should prejudice the other's crimes; and aggravate the punishment prepared for him. And who are those unworthy of our attention and civility; unworthy of the care to please them? Beings, perhaps, more worthy than ourselves, though less externally endowed; they, perhaps, who, had we been in need, would have cherished us, in affliction; would have consoled us. though needing them not, we have never proved it. Some, it may be, who, though we perceive it not,

have hearts so deeply tried of sorrow, that, could we know all, our bosoms would yearn with tender pity over what we ignorantly wound by neglect and incivility; and some, it is more than probable, whatever be the cloud of ignorance or sin, that now hangs over them, with whom we are desired to pass a long eternity in the holy fellowship of heaven.

Upon Christian principles, then, we are prepared to say, that it is our duty to be courteous; and as far as may be, agreeable to all with whom Providence brings us in connexion; whether we meet them for a day or an hour, or the whole compass of our lives. We are not to be idle to please the idle; or ignorant to please the ignorant; or vicious to please the vicious: and if we were, we should not succeed in pleasing them. But we are to rejoice with those that rejoice, and to weep with those that weep. To contribute, all we can, in small things as well as in great, to meliorate the dark condition of our race, and scatter flowers on a thorny path. If we are in company with those whose tastes and habits are opposed to ours, we are to put some restraint upon our own, that theirs may not be offended: if with those whose manners are disgusting, or tempers uncongenial to us; we are bound to cast a veil over the disgust they undesignedly excite. We are bound to withhold a remark that will give pain, or an opinion that will offend, unless some essential purpose is to be answered by their expression. To say this is deception or insincerity, is no other than to say, it is deception to restrain any evil passion, or suppress any angry thought, or selfish feeling: nor is there any thing in manners and tempers, we hold more selfish, unlovely, and unchristian, than that sort of self-indulgence which wounds every body's feelings, under pretext of candour and sincerity. I

advise the lovers of so much honesty, to make clean the mansion, and put forth ¹⁵ a few of its inhabitants, before they venture to set wide the gates, that all may be witness of what is passing within.

It appears to me, young people cannot go forth into the world under a more false impression, than this persuasion, that they owe no courtesy to any but those whom circumstances or preference happen to make their friends. They owe it to every individual without exception, who has not forfeited it by offence against them: for every individual is their fellow, and their kindred, and their companion; in a destiny, of which the beginning, and the purport, and the issue are the same: and, therefore, each one is a claimant on their sympathy and benevolence. To say that we would do them any kindness in their need, or confer any substantial benefit in our power, but refuse to conciliate in our ordinary intercourse, is to offer that which we have not, in excuse for withholding that which we have. Our benevolence may never have an occasion of exercise in substantial benefits: in complacency, kindness, and courtesy, and an accommodating spirit, we may always, and to every one, evince it.

We know that the devoted Christian has something more to say respecting the discountenance that should be given to folly and irreligion; the distinction to be made between those who serve God, and those who serve him not. This distinction must exist in the feelings of all who sincerely love their Lord: but I cannot see in it, an excuse for the cold, repulsive, harsh, unsocial, unconciliating manner, some pious people assume towards those whom they consider less religious than themselves. We are the fellow-criminals, not the judge: whatever be our penitence and hope of pardon, we are here the at-

tainted rebels of our sovereign; not the administrators of his justice: and whatever be the present promise of his mercy towards us more than them, his pity takes not its limits from our judgment; and it may be they will enter into the kingdom of heaven before us.

But if still it does not appear that we ought to cultivate habits of kindness, attention, and civility, to all around us: behold, there was One who came into that crowded prison-house, that did not belong to it: its attainted inhabitants were not to his mind: there was no spirit there congenial to his nature, or fitted to hold communion with him. Their ways, were not as his ways; nor their feelings as his feelings. Day by day their discordant natures jarred on his holy bosom; and their impure pursuits revolted his celestial innocence. Yet He walked courteously in the midst of all, and stood not aloof from any. He wept over their ills, indeed, and he reproved their wrongs; but he kept none at a distance as unworthy of his regard: he dwelt with them as a brother and a friend: took an interest in their lawful occupations; conformed to their habits, as far as they were not sinful; and adapted his benefits and his advice, to the peculiar character and need of each. Is the subject greater than his ruler? Is the servant wiser than his Lord?

POLITENESS.

Politeness is the moral grace of life, if I may venture so to term it. the grace of the mind. What the world accounts graces are little more than the graces of the body.

DR. BROWN.

WALKING one morning by myself—an unfavourable circumstance for a Listener—and in a lonely place, where though I could not please myself as Rousseau did, with believing the foot of man had never trodden, I certainly could discern no traces of his despoiling hand. A fit of enthusiasm, such as poets, I suppose, are subject to, seized upon my brain in favour of nature's unassisted works: and in most sublime soliloquy, I began to decry the assassinations, committed by man's sacrilegious hand, upon her charms. I compared the briery path I was creeping through with difficulty, to the broad, beaten turnpike; the elegance and simplicity of the wild-flowers, half hiding, half showing themselves, upon their beds of green, to the trained, and trimmed, and methodically-planted flowers of the garden: trees, whence no pruner had ever lopped a branch: grass, whence the mower had not filled his scythe, nor the reaper his bosom: recesses, where for years, the readbreast had returned to rebuild its nest, and found it as he left it. "What a pity it is," I exclaimed, "that man should intermeddle with what God has made, and mar the beauties he can never mend! When all that avarice and vanity suggest

has been tried, to torture our parks and gardens into form, are they to be compared to the wild, woody glade, that knows no training but from nature's hand, yearly returning to redress her work?" So I thought, and so have poets said and sung for ages past: and so sure was I growing that every thing should be as nature made it, that it is possible I might have gone on to say, as some have said, that rather than clear a wood for building houses and making turnpikes, it would be advisable to live like our forefathers, in the hollows of trees, and reach our habitation over sting-nettles, had I not, in the midst of my soliloquy, egressed from this same wood, and within sight of man's lamented depredations, found myself upon the beach.

It chanced that there was walking there a man who seemed intent on finding something among the pebbles. Often he stooped down to pick them up, and after a little examination, threw them from him. Once only I perceived, that having looked at one with attention, he retained it in his hands. "Why," said I, "do you prefer that stone to all the rest?" "Because," he replied, "it is of value, and they are worth nothing." "And yet," I answered, "I see no beauty in that, more than in the others: it is a rough, brown stone." "It is so now, and there is no beauty in it; but there is value: when I have cut and polished it, and set it in a golden rim, its beauty will be acknowledged; and rival purchasers will contend for the possession. Come to my laboratory, and I will show you the richest jewels of the Eastern mine, and you will say they seem but inelegant and worthless stones; see them again upon the brow of royalty, or on the neck of beauty; and you will gaze on them, as nature's most exquisite productions." This was true; but then my solilo

quy was absolutely wasted : for here were nature's most valuable, most inimitable, and probably, most tedious productions, not only improved by art, but owing to it, all their perceptible, though not their real value. The gem was a gem while it lay neglected in the sand ; but most would have passed it by unheeded ; or, finding, have rejected it as of little value ; and even when the worth was ascertained, we doubt much if any lady would be ambitious to string the unpolished jewels for her bosom, or bind them in her hair.

There are things besides stones, that, valuable in themselves, need the factitious aid of ornament to make them lovely. All the polish in the world, it is true, would not make of the worthless stone a diamond ; and whoever knew the value, would take the gem without it, and reject the other in its richest brilliancy : but the rich jewel must be set and polished, before its beauty is perceived ; or with the unskilful, the glittering paste may be preferred before it. Is not this a truth too much forgotten by some who think it enough to be good, without remembering to be agreeable ? With some parents, who, while they store the minds of their children with knowledge, and lead them forward in the paths of truth, fearful, perhaps, of fostering vanity, or overlooking the importance of recommending by exterior beauty the interior worth, totally neglect their manners, habits, and appearance ? Is it not so with some young persons, who, earnestly desiring to please God, and loving their fellow-creatures for his sake, do yet misjudgingly despise, or carelessly neglect, those trifles that, trifles as they are, make all the difference between an agreeable and a disagreeable woman ; and though they affect not the moral or religious worth, will make that worth the more or

the less acceptable and lovely? Such persons are surely doing wrong; and if professing to be religious, doubly wrong—for the blame will be cast upon their religion, not upon themselves: they render that unlovely and unattractive which is in itself most beautiful; they revolt where they ought to win. There is no natural connexion, no possible affinity, between religion and awkwardness, coarseness, and incivility, an unpolished manner, or an ungraceful mind. This seems so impossible, that we should not think to speak of it, did we not see every day instances of a mistaken, we could almost say, a proud neglect of these attentions, in persons whose minds are truly occupied with greater matters; and did we not every day hear, without being able to contradict it, that good people are disagreeable. To elder persons and to parents much might be said: but I listen for the young, and will end my apostrophe with the tale that gave rise to it.

I have heard, or read of somebody, who, on visiting the magnificent fabrics of Italy, which they had heard were of marble, was very much disappointed to find them not polished from top to bottom, smooth, and shining like a marble chimney-piece—for any thing they saw, the buildings might as well have been of common stone. Much such a dunce, I fear, did I prove myself, when I accepted an invitation from a family, of whom I had heard so much good report, that I had long been anxious to be admitted to their society. The excellence of their education; the cultivation bestowed on their minds; and the high religious principles that regulated their conduct; were things of so much notoriety in the neighbourhood, that I could not but form the most pleasing anticipation of pleasure in my intercourse with them; and the highest possible esti-

mate of their worth. If I was disappointed, the fault perhaps was mine ; for their worth was equal to the representation made of it : they were all I have said, and all I had heard : what right had I to expect more ? I had heard these young ladies had both talent and principle, and I went prepared to admire and love them. As I staid some time in the house, I had opportunities of observing them under different circumstances, at home and abroad, in company and alone : what I have to remark, therefore, must not be understood to have passed in one day, or in quite such rapid succession as I tell it ; neither did each thing happen once only. I describe their habitual deportment.

When I was first conducted into the house, two young ladies were sitting in the drawing-room ; one engaged with her book, the other with her needle. Whether each one had a task to perform, and feared the doom's-day clock might strike before it was completed, I cannot say ; but neither ceased their occupation when I entered ; though, as a guest and a stranger, it might have been expected I should be in some manner received by them, in their parents' absence. They answered when I spoke to them, it is true ; but they never made any attempt to address me. Miss Julia kept her elbow on the table, and her head on her hand, in such a position as almost to turn her back towards the sofa on which I was sitting ; and even when she did speak, held her eyes as intently fixed on her book, as if some magic power held them in perpetual durance. Miss Emma, whose work was of a description I thought might as well have been done in her chamber, or at least removed on the entrance of a guest, was, as one might suppose, under the influence of some vow not to remove her nose above two inches from her thimble.

The most natural inference from such a reception would have been that my visit was unwelcome; but I had reason to know the contrary: and I had frequent occasions afterwards to observe, that all persons, whether friends or strangers, had to encounter, on their approach, the persevering industry of these ladies. Indeed, whoever desired the Miss B.'s civility, must wait for it; for when a few days after I introduced to them, in our walk, some young persons with whom I knew they desired intimacy, they gave an inclination of the head, with a look that might very well be mistaken for a frown; turned their backs immediately, and went on with their own conversation. Be it not, however, supposed that the Miss B.'s could not communicate, or would not, when it was perfectly convenient with themselves. Julia was, indeed, of a temper silent and reserved, though wanting neither feeling nor affection: Emma was lively and animated in the extreme. It was easy to perceive that the same effects in each had resulted from different causes. In Julia, from an indolent indifference to things she considered not essential; in Emma, from a contempt of what she believed beneath her.

There was company that evening, and having found the young ladies so greatly *agreeable* alone, I was curious to see what they might be in society. They did not, however, think it necessary to be ready for some time after they were expected in the room. At length Miss Julia made her appearance through the door-way—one might almost say through the door—for she opened it but barely wide enough to force her small person through the interstice. Whether there was any one present she was glad to see, remained a riddle; so eager was she to get pos-

session of the nearest corner of the nearest chair she could find, seeming by no means aware, that she might sit as safely in the middle of it; and having reached the chair, she took care to leave it no more that night.

Emma's approach was by no means so peaceful: with the assistance of a gust of wind, she contrived to startle every body from their seats by the banging of the door; stumbled over two stools, and a work-table, before she reached the upper end of the room; and went down on the sofa with a bang, that, had her specific gravity been greater, might have endangered the fragile ornaments of the chimney. And this evening, though I could not hear the subject of her discourse, or guess the cause of her mirth, I had the first proof that Emma could both laugh and talk; for she continued during the whole evening in half-whispering discourse, accompanied by frequent titter, with a young person of her own age: their hands fast locked in each other, to intimate, I suppose, the inseparability of their affections; and wo to the unlucky wight who attempted to be thirds in the discourse. I addressed them sometimes, and so did others; but an immediate cessation of their discourse, a monosyllable reply to our address; and a look exchanged between them, sufficiently intimated that we might spare ourselves the trouble. Certainly, had I been asked that night if the Miss B.'s were agreeable girls, my veracity or my friendship must have conceded in the reply.

The time did come, nevertheless, when I was allowed to hear these young ladies converse: but though to all appearance they spoke the vulgar tongue, the subject of their discourse was not much more intelligible than if it had been the vernacular

language of Kamtschatka or Peru. Neither persons nor things had the names by which I had been accustomed to hear them called: and then there was so profuse an admixture of "by words," "family sayings," and "standing jokes," one needed to be provided with a glossary as long as the list of French idioms with which a modern traveller sets out on his first visit to Paris. That all this was very amusing, and very innocently so, to themselves, I make no doubt; but I had been accustomed to suppose that when we speak at table, or in company with others good-breeding requires we should converse in some known tongue, that all may, if they please, take part in the conversation. So sure was I, however, of the talents and good sense of the ladies, I did not doubt their conversation would be very edifying, if ever I could gain a share of it, and I resolved to abide in patience some opportunities of addressing them in my own way. In pursuance of this resolve, I watched every occasion to draw them into conversation.

Walking with Miss Julia, I gathered a flower, and made some remarks upon its properties: she knew nothing about flowers, and thought it a useless pursuit. I ventured to observe, that since the Almighty had condescended to create them, it might possibly not be beneath his creatures to take notice of them. Thinking these subjects might be too light for the lady's wisdom, I next attempted something deeper; but her modesty here came in aid of her taciturnity; and she said the subject was too deep for her understanding: and so the conversation ended. Sitting with Miss Emma, I asked if she had finished any drawings lately. She answered that she had done several, but did not know where any of them were; a plain intimation that she drew for her own plea-

sure, not for mine. When assembled in the family circle, my attempts were equally fruitless: the young ladies never happened to hear what was passing in their presence. Julia seldom answered till she had been addressed three times; and Emma generally chimed into the middle of somebody's speech, with remarks quite foreign to the subject; setting all right in the end, by confessing they were thinking of something else; a compliment of which they were very prodigal in all companies.

As these ladies professed to be Christians, I would not suppose them to be more than usually selfish, nor in their dispositions were they: but in defiance of what is usually supposed to be a requisition of good-breeding, they were invariably fond of talking of their own affairs. It has been said that, to be agreeable in conversation, we must never speak of ourselves; the Miss B.'s had no such maxim. However abstract might be the subject, where it began, it always ended in, "*I saw,*" "*I said,*" "*I did—my friends—my house—my studies—my family—my prospects.*" I had not long been acquainted with them, before I perceived that particular attention had been paid to the pronunciation of their words, and as their education had been something classical, it cannot be disputed that they were most technically correct.

There are those who think it more elegant, because more polite, to talk the language of the society in which we live, and allow words to keep the sound custom had assigned them. However this may be, they had an invariable habit of repeating immediately, as by accident of course, every word they supposed to be mispronounced by another. I never found an opportunity of telling them, that I knew those who would spoil any speech they happen to be

making, rather than repeat in a different manner a word they suppose to be mispronounced by another. I might not have observed upon this extraordinary accuracy, had it not been to contrast it with an inaccuracy of a very remarkable kind; for though so particular about the sound of words, these ladies evinced a marvellous disregard of their meaning. At the breakfast-table we had tea *excruciatingly* hot, poured out of a *lovely* teapot, and accompanied by bread and butter of *infinite* excellence. In our walks, we saw the *sweetest* ships that ever sailed the waters; the most *exquisite* cows that ever ate grass; and returning *agonized* with cold, we not unfrequently found a *heavenly* fire, by which we sat down *enraptured*: comfortably bewailing the *cruel* shortness of the days, and the *eternal* length of the nights: particularly when we had an *immeasurable* quantity of chestnuts to roast, of which the ladies declared themselves to be *devotedly fond*.

My ears were not the only senses doomed to be *agonized*, to the use the ladies' own words, by their incongruities. As there was no appearance of extraordinary economy in Mrs. B.'s establishment, and I had no reason to suppose a want of means, I could not but be surprised at the ordinary adjustment of the young ladies' habiliments. The evenings I saw them in company, they were indeed expensively dressed; but on all common occasions it was difficult to say whether the sempstress or the washerwoman, was most wanted: added to which, their clothes, being always too big or too little, were evidently made for somebody else: the outer and the inner garments could seldom agree to keep the same boundary: the buttons would not button, and the ties would not tie. If other people wore things one way, the Miss B.'s wore them in the opposite: not, as I found on

inquiry, from affected singularity; but because they did not observe but what other people's were the same. After keeping us waiting half an hour for their presence at the dinner table, they made their appearance in the morning dress; not at all the cleaner for another day's service; excusing themselves that they had not had time to dress. Observing Miss Emma's locks one morning in all the simplicity of native straightness, I ventured to ask if she had been bathing. By no means; but she had been reading so late the night before, she had not time to curl her hair.

One thing must be acknowledged; if the Miss B's never thought it necessary to please in manner, person, or conversation, there was at least so much of fairness in their dealing, that they never thought it necessary to be pleased themselves. I had been in the habit of supposing that civility requires us to seem pleased with whatever is done to please us, and that without dissimulation: for if the thing itself is not acceptable, the motive of kindness that dictates it should be so. Nothing you could show them met their expectations—nothing you could give them was what they wanted. Wherever you went with them, they wished themselves at home. If you talked to them they yawned; if you played to them they chattered; if you read to them they went to sleep. They were sufficiently attentive at all times to their own accommodation. Some might think they were totally occupied with themselves, to the entire exclusion of every thing else. If their companions would walk, they were tired; if they would sit, they feared to take cold. The grass was wet, and they could not damp their feet: the bushes had thorns, and they should tear their clothes: the stiles were high, and they could not get over: the hills

were steep, and they could not get up. All great inconveniencies, as every body knows; but as they were strong and healthy, I was inclined to wish they would sometimes wet their feet, rend their clothes, and take cold into the bargain, rather than be always consulting their bodies' welfare, to the impeding of every body's purpose and the interruption of every body's pleasure. But I fear my readers will be tired of my friends—in truth, and so was I.

THE TWO INVITATIONS.

Nothing can less contribute to vigour of action than protracted, anxious fluctuations, intermingled with resolutions decided and revolved, while yet nothing causes a greater expense of feeling. The heart is fretted and exhausted by being subjected to an alternation of contrary excitements, with the mortifying consciousness of their contributing to no end.

FOSTER.

SOME of my readers, will no doubt wonder, that I contrive to hear so many things they never happen to have heard themselves. Nay, some may even go so far as to doubt whether I really do hear all I tell. I would advise them, that hearing depends greatly upon listening; for many things pass under our eyes that we do not see, and under our ears that we do not hear, for want of attention and observation; and, what is far more extraordinary, these very things that we hear not and see not, are the things we are ourselves doing, or saying, or thinking, or feeling. If I could prevail on some of my incredulous friends to listen to themselves, to what is whispered in their bosoms, as well as to what finds louder utterance, for one whole year, I should be much surprised if, at the end of it, they could not tell me some very marvellous stories: and some, perhaps, that had I told them, they might not have taken to be truth. This preamble I should not have made, as having little to do with the subject of my story, had I not been apprehensive that some of my readers will doubt whether I ever heard what I am going to relate.

The three daughters of Lady S. had received something more than a fashionable education; though it must be allowed, a fashionable education in the last ten years, is nearer to being a good one, than at any time we know of in the annals of the world. I do not mean to speak particularly of her Ladyship's character, because my criticisms presume not to reach my elders; except so far as her character may disclose itself in the concerns of her family, and the conversations I was so fortunate as to hear. The outward seeming and circumstance of her condition I may mention, as being that with which the world is, doubtless, well acquainted already. A widow, while her children were yet babies, with more rank than she had fortune to support, this excellent mother had supplied by most assiduous care, and many ingenious contrivances, the deficiency of income, as it might have affected her daughters' education. Withdrawn from a world that had lost its attraction for her, since the bosom's friend was gone who had been, to her, all its zest and interest, she had time to form and execute her plans of education, without interruption from other claims; and whether her plans were good or bad, or both, of which I mean to give no opinion, they were maturely considered, and very consistently executed. She knew her daughters were to move in a genteel, possibly an elevated station in life; and she resolved to omit nothing that could prepare them for it, and fit them to be admired and beloved. She knew they were to pass out of this sublunary sphere of action, into one in which neither the love nor the admiration they had gained in it, would avail them any thing; and she resolved to prepare them for this too. The proportionate degree of importance she attached to these separate objects, or whether either had undue

preponderance in her measures, remains a secret to the, and may as well remain so to the world; since He who judges from principles, rather than from actions; who, while he looks closely to the motives of a conduct seemingly fair, judges leniently of the mistakes that supervene upon the best intentions, has alone to do with this decision.

The Miss S.'s had been taught, as all other ladies are, to do every thing; and they had also been taught, as all other ladies are not, to understand, reflect, and judge. Unlike those parents, who, by too much constraint, make their children passive machines, up to a certain age, and then expect they should know how to move alone, Lady S. had rather guided than constrained their minds. She had accustomed them to deliberate, to reason, and to choose. Whether at their age she did right to let them take their choice, when she herself thought it a wrong one, is not my business to determine. I have only to disclose the fact that it was so. If, in relating what I overhear, I should alter things to my own taste, my readers would have cause to complain of my want of veracity; therefore, whatever may be thought of this, I am not responsible: and can only say, so runs my story.

Nothing had been omitted to give grace and beauty to the minds and persons of these young people. They had been taught to walk and to dance; and to lie down and to sit up; and to dress and to undress: but not more assiduously had they been tutored in all these things on a Saturday, than they had been taught to read and pray on a Sunday. I do not mean ostentatiously—far from it; they had been accustomed to spend the Sabbath properly. They had learned catechisms, and read tracts; and better than this, they had been made intimately ac

quainted with the sacred language of Scripture; and pains had been taken to make them understand, and feel their interest in it. And here, alas! so captious are our critics, I must again pause to make excuse for my story. I am aware that some will say the dancing and dressing should have been omitted; and others will say the catechisms and tracts should have been omitted; for, whoever met with a lady that thought another lady's child had been properly brought up? I never did. But if any one says the statement is not consistent, I beg their pardon. Every one who knows Lady S. knows it to be exactly correct; and those who are not of her Ladyship's acquaintance, may find many among their friends, titled and untitled, who are pursuing very much the same plan.

Lady S.'s system of education had in one respect differed from that of some fashionable mothers, who think the best preparation for succeeding in the world, is to be kept in total ignorance of it, till a certain age; when the new claimant on its smiles, who has had intercourse only with her governess, her waiting maid, and possibly, but not certainly, with her parents, comes forth as at a signal into the mid-day of its splendours, its allurements, its joys, its difficulties, and its crimes; to understand them if she can, and abide them, if she may. What would become of the mazed and dazzled vision, that had for eighteen years been closed in impenetrable darkness, as a preparation for opening at once on the full blaze of a meridian sun? Lady S. had accustomed her girls to her own society and that of her friends; and without exactly taking them into public, had accustomed them to frequent and free communication with beings, among whom they were to find their future happiness, and perform their future du

ties. How the three daughters happened to come to maturity at the same time, is, I confess, a difficulty. I do not say they were all of the same age; yet they could not be very far apart. If I were more used to telling stories, I should not be puzzled by these small difficulties, perhaps. A good novelist can have the moon at the full many times in a month; and what might seem equally difficult to a plain astronomer, can make a full moon rise in the middle of the night. Why, then, may I not make the three daughters of Lady S. *come out* at the same time? It remains only to be further understood, that I, listening, heard the succeeding conversation.

"My girls," said Lady S. to her daughters, as they sat round the tea-table one Sunday evening, "you have reached the age at which I have always promised you an introduction to the world; for which you have been so many years preparing yourselves. I have given you every advantage befitting your rank, that may enable you to enjoy its pleasures; and such principles as I trust may help you to avoid its dangers. I have prepared you for the world, because you must sojourn in it a little time; you must act in it the part assigned you: society will lay its claim to you; and if I had neglected, in your education, any of its requirements, the world would have said, and you might sometime have said yourselves, that your mother had failed of her duty towards you, and suffered her own sorrows to blight the budding of your joys. But I have told you too, that this world is not your abiding place; nor its maxims your safest guide; nor its pleasures your best enjoyment. The higher importance of eternal things, the greater claim of Him who made you, on your affections, the better happiness his love

prepares for you, are themes you have not now to hear of first. Knowledge of either world, as far as it can be communicated to you by another, you cannot want : the time is come when you are to take upon yourselves the character of women, and of Christians, on your own behalf ; and personally to answer to God and man the claims that each may have on you, for which hitherto I have been in some measure your sponsor. I need scarcely remind you that you have a fortnight since, after the manner of our Church, renewed in confirmation your baptismal vows : you cannot be forgetful what they were ; and that you promised by them, not only to believe the word of God, but to obey it ; not only to devote yourselves to his service, but to renounce every thing that may stand in opposition to it, or interfere with it ; whether it be the sinful suggestions of your own heart, prompted by the evil spirit to do his own dark works, or the allurements of the world, whose pomp, and fashion, and too vehement desires, you pledged yourselves neither to follow nor to be led by. I trust you are ready to fulfil your vows, and keep your faith with Heaven."

"I hope so, mamma," said Emma, "it was a solemn service ; and when I had gone through it, I felt I had pledged myself to do, I scarce know what ; and certainly have but little power to perform, except as strength from above is promised to the wish and the endeavour."

"On the other hand, the world you have promised not to follow, awaits you and invites you : you have blessings to seek from it ; and duties to perform in it : you can neither do without the one, nor are at liberty to evade the other :—these opposing duties"—

"But why, dear mother," said Maria, "should

hey stand opposed? God made the world and placed us in it; surely, then, we may partake of it without offence to Him? I do not see any difficulties in dividing our attention between our religious duties, and the concerns of life, and giving to each"—

"Its due proportion, you would say," interrupted Lady S., "and, it is true, you must; but not to each an equal share; and as they will too often clash, there must be in every such instance a preference to one above the other—my children surely know to which the preference is due."

"Of course, mamma," said Fanny; "every body knows that God is to be preferred before the world, and we shall never think of doing otherwise. But I do long to go out, and taste the delights of society: it is so natural at our age to like pleasure, that it cannot possibly be wrong. When one is older, it may be different. When are we to begin to go out, mamma?"

"That is exactly what I was preparing to tell you—I have two invitations for you this week."

"Two in one week! O, that is delightful!" cried Fanny.

"I should have preferred that it had happened otherwise; for, as we are circumstanced, considerable preparation will be necessary for your appearance in public on such occasions, especially as it is the first time," said Lady S.

"But then, dear mamma, it is the more fortunate, because one preparation will do for both," answered Maria.

"Not exactly so, I fear: it rather appears to me that it will be desirable to put off one or the other: but I intend to leave this to your choice. You are invited to a ball on Friday, at Mrs. Askill's, where all who are the most distinguished in the country will

be assembled together. Though there will be but few girls there whose rank is higher than your own; there will be none, perhaps, whose fortune is less; therefore, to make an appearance equal to others, you must depend on your own industry and contrivance."

"O yes," cried Fanny, "we can make our own dresses, and all that. There will be plenty of time before Friday. I should not mind sitting up all night if——But what a pity we did not begin before. When did you get the invitations?"

"On Saturday. But I had reasons for not communicating it till this evening. Could it be avoided, I had rather not see your time so spent; but you know I cannot afford to purchase dresses for you, such as you will like to appear in, where all will be so gay and brilliant."

"Certainly," said Maria, "I should like to look like other people. I shall lie awake to-night thinking how we can contrive the prettiest dresses at the smallest cost. It will not signify about the time they take for once; we can put off our other employments just for a single week. One, two, three, four days, besides great part of Friday—for it will do, if they are done by the time we want to dress, but"——

"But, mamma, you have forgotten the other invitation," said Emma.

"The other, my love, was received this morning: you heard it as well as myself, and cannot, I am sure, have forgotten it. You know that it is not usual for young persons in our Church to take the Sacrament till they have been confirmed; but after that ceremony has been attended to, I should be sorry that there were reason longer to delay it, as I believe I have mentioned to you before; and the invi-

tation was given this morning to all that are religiously and devotedly disposed."

"Well, but, mamma, what has that to do with Mrs. Askill's ball?" said Fanny.

"No more, my dear, than that I do not see how you can attend to both."

"I cannot see that at all: the Sacrament is on Sunday; not on Friday, and"——

"Stay, my child; recollect the nature of the invitation before you decide on this matter. The feast you are invited to is at the table of the Lord. It is a joyful feast, indeed, for it is the commemoration of his love; and, to those who partake of it aright, it is the sweet pledge, and foretaste of eternal bliss: but it is also a serious one, setting forth, in lively emblems, a tale of agony and death, that must ever fill our eyes with tears, and tinge our cheeks with shame. It is with good reason, therefore, that we are exhorted, ere we present ourselves at the feast, to consider the dignity of the ceremony, and examine deeply the state of our own hearts, that we may make such appearance there as may become the occasion. If you think a whole week's preparation scarcely enough to do honour to the invitation of an earthly friend, can you present yourselves before your heavenly benefactor, the Maker of heaven and earth, without any previous pains bestowed, or time expended, to make ready for his presence? The dress is different, indeed, as is the occasion; one is the outside trickery, of no importance in itself; for with it, you are no other than without it: attended to in conformity to the usages of society, by custom only rendered suitable or unsuitable to the occasion. The other—how shall I speak meetly of its importance? You cannot, indeed, make yourselves fit to appear—no pains of yours can veil

your unworthiness or lessen it; nor any preparation be, as some mistake it, a ticket of admittance that gives you a right to come and claim the benefits of this holy feast. You come by invitation free and unmerited; but there is a requisition plain and positive from Him who sends it, as to the manner of your appearing. The form of invitation used by our church is the language of Scripture, and those who do not use the same words, give it the same meaning. We are bidden to examine not only the state of our hearts, at the present moment, but the records of our past lives; that where we have been wrong, we may confess the wrong: lament it deeply, and determine to amend it, as far as may be, for the future; and it is not only the act, but the thought, and word, and deed, we are to examine. Nay, there may be something even to be done, as well as determined. We are expressly forbidden to approach with malice or envy in our hearts; or unforgiven wrong, rankling in our bosoms; or injury on our heads; for which we are inclined to make no reparation. Scripture is very express in this: for even when we come to the table, if we recollect any thing of wrong between us and our fellow-creatures, we are bidden to go away, and make no offering till we are in a better mind. The reason of all this is very plain. We come to the feast as sinners, unworthy to gather up a crumb that falls from it, and seeking pardon for our sins through the merits of a Saviour. Ill would it become us to bring in our bosoms, envy and jealousy, and resentment; the birth of pride, the workings of a mind that holds itself at higher price than others have had respect to. Ill, very ill, would it become us, to bring with us a reckoning of the unpaid dues we are determined on exacting from each other. We come to a banquet of love—love

immutable, immeasurable: such as heaven wonders at, and earth can never comprehend. Ill-dressed guests, indeed, we must appear, if love be not the absorbing feeling of our souls, to the suspension, at least, of every other sentiment. And then we come for a purpose; we come for remission and a cure, as well as to make acknowledgment of deepest gratitude, to Him, through whose death and passion we can alone receive them. How can this be, if we have taken no account beforehand of our debts or their amount? or if we have known nothing of the symptoms of the disease we come to be relieved of; nor have given ourselves the trouble to inquire how far we really need, or desire any of these things? Our enjoyment at the feast will be proportioned to our sense of the benefit. Our sense of the benefit will be proportioned to our sense of need: and our gratitude to both. And what can we know of this, without examination of our hearts and lives? This preparation is called the wedding-garment, and with reason too; for the resemblance holds good: the garment was not a cause of the invitation, nor an inducement to receive the guest; nor a title to sit down at another's table; nor a payment made for the entertainment there: yet was it that, without which, none could be welcomed at a marriage-feast. And now, my children, you must decide for yourselves, whether you can, without preparation, accept this invitation for the first time in your lives."

"I think we cannot," replied Fanny; "and as we shall certainly not have time to think of it properly, it will be better to put it off: for the ball, you know, cannot be put off, and Mrs. Askill gives but one in a year. It is a long promise that we should be there; and she is of so much consequence in the neighbourhood, it would not do to offend her. Be-

sides, we shall have so much pleasure: every body will be there, and it will be such an odd reason to give for staying away. The Sacrament will be repeated in a month or two, and then, perhaps, we shall have nothing to prevent our receiving it seriously, and as we ought."

"You are left to your own choice, Fanny; but be mindful of your profession and your vow. You are preferring what you esteem pleasure, to what you know to be a duty: you are setting the opinions of men before the express command of God. You are offering to your heavenly Father an excuse, that would not be accepted by an earthly friend. I fear that preference, you were so sure just now would incline to the right side, has already fallen on the wrong. But what says my Maria?"

"I am thinking very seriously what is to be done," answered Maria; "I should be very sorry to neglect the Sacrament, which I anticipated with desire, besides the sense of duty. But, indeed, mamma, I do not see why it cannot be managed. We shall be busy, to be sure, till Friday; but while our fingers are employed for one purpose, our thoughts may be upon the other. And then, you know, there will be a day on Saturday, that we can quite give our minds to serious thought. I should not like to give up either, if you leave it to my choice."

"You may try it, Maria; for I believe you sufficiently conscientious, when the Sunday comes, to give up your purpose, if you find your mind unfit. And Emma?"

"I cannot go to the ball, mamma—it is not possible."

"And why not, Emma?"

"Because, while you were speaking to me, my mind took a hasty glance upon itself; and I saw

within it so much to think of, so much to reflect upon; and I felt so much need of the medicine, and so long a debt to reckon up, and so great desire to receive the offered pledge of my Redeemer's love, and, after sixteen years of kindness and favour lavished on me, to make my first public acknowledgment at his table—I cannot, mamma, do any thing that will prevent this invitation, or unfit me from accepting it.”

“ You have your choice, my children,” answered Lady S., “ with liberty to change it, if you see occasion.”*

We left our story on the Sunday evening; I would persuade myself it is not there we should resume it. I would rather believe, and so I am sure would my readers, that I was mistaken, when, after a sermon had been read, and family prayers had been offered, and the ladies had withdrawn to their chambers, I heard through the walls that parted us, certain words which might be construed into a commencement of the weeks preparation. Such, for instance, as blond, and chenille, and gimp, and piping, all very innocent things in themselves; and if my imagination connected them with any thing not quite appropriate to the time and circumstance, my readers will say the fault is mine; that I have no right to suppose, still less to relate, any thing more than I did really hear. I would not, on any account, be thought censorious; therefore I will leave it as a thing of course, that while the evening sermon was

* How far Lady S. acted consistently with her Christian profession and her duty to her children, is left to the reader to determine: some may be a little surprised, under all the circumstances of the case, that she permitted her daughters to attend the ball; and they may wonder still more if they should learn that she accompanied them there.

preached, the invitations came not into the minds of the young ladies, and that while prayers were offered, no thought of dresses occurred: and that before they went to sleep, they did not speak, and after they went to sleep, they did not dream of any thing connected with the subject. In which very probable case, the Miss S.'s stand acquitted of having commenced their preparations before Monday morning. I am quite certain they rose that morning at daybreak: and as getting up early, whether to do any thing or nothing, is an established proof of industry and activity, I beg I may not be understood to object to that circumstance.

As my curiosity had been considerably excited by the conversation of the evening, I felt some regret that I could hear nothing during these early hours, but the opening and shutting of drawers, the overturning of bandboxes, and certain other indistinct sounds, to which I could not attach any meaning. The breakfast-table relieved my mind of this regret.

"Mamma," said Fanny, the moment she appeared, "we have been so busy trying on all the gowns we have, to find which pattern will fit us best; and then we could not determine upon the colour. We have been trying all colours to see which becomes us, and I think I look best in blue, and Maria is positive she looks best in pink, and so we almost quarrelled about it; for you know we must be dressed alike. At last, when we found it was impossible to agree, and we were only wasting time, we determined to refer it to you, to choose for us."

This at least proved a wise measure, and before the whole hour of breakfast had elapsed, the decision was made. As the young ladies were decidedly amiable, of course the lady of the rejected colour showed no signs of vexation. And now the plot

thickened fast ; for the mercer came, and his packages of goods came, and there was measuring of breadths, and measuring of lengths, and many very intricate calculations besides, to make the least possible quantity do the greatest possible service. In the issue, it appeared to me, that the materials selected were simple, tasteful, and very little expensive.

It would be quite superfluous to describe the whole process of dress-making. Every lady who has made her *entre* into the gay world, without a long purse at her command, knows what ensues upon wanting a ball-dress in a hurry ; and can picture to herself the state of the apartment, during the first stage of the proceeding. The various articles of apparel consigned to the backs of chairs ; the piano converted into a measuring-board ; the attendance of all the females in the house, except the cook, with thimbles on their middle finger : the trying on, and cutting out, and fitting in. It was impossible not to admire the skill and ingenuity of the young ladies. I should have felt much interest in the scene, and made many a wise reflection on the beauty of domestic usefulness, and feminine industry ; and for any thing I know, might have written an essay on the advantage of ladies being early taught to help themselves in these indispensables of life, could I have forgotten, as early as they had done, the conversation of the preceding evening : but, lest it should ever seem that I neglect to commend what is in itself commendable, I beg my friends to remember, that I was marking the progress of this week, with reference to its destined termination, and with the two INVITATIONS ever on my mind.

Dresses, as Miss Maria had previously observed, are made with hands : but, excepting the housemaid.

who did, or meant to do, only what she was bidden, and always had that to undo, because, as she said, she was thinking of something else : more probably because she was not thinking at all ; the thoughts and tongues of the industrious group were fully employed during this first day. And much I heard of the comparative merits of full fronts, or plain fronts, and high backs, and low backs, and circles and squares, and vandykes, and scollops, and straight-ways, and cross-ways, and long-ways. It came once in my head to wonder if, in the days of Grecian elegance and classic taste, there were so many *ways* of making a gown. Time, with its usual malevolence, sped the quicker for the need there was of it. Night came and the ladies stole some hour or two upon its wintry length ; and rose but the earlier to renew their labours ; and like to the first day, was the second.

"I am very glad," said Maria, as they sat something more quietly at the work-table on the evening of Tuesday—"I am very glad the bustle of choosing and planning our dresses is over ; now, though we must work hard to get the trimming done, we have nothing more to contrive, and therefore need not talk or think about our work : I really shall be glad to give my mind to better thoughts."

"I do not know what you can do, Maria," replied Fanny ; "but I never can attend to two things at once. Any very serious subject would be so totally out of harmony with my present thoughts and desires, which are all engrossed with the care of my personal appearance, and the anticipation of pleasure, it would seem almost a profanation to introduce any such. Solomon says, there is a time for all things : but he does not say we can do all things at the same time ; therefore, till this week is over, I can give my mind to nothing but this ball."

"If we were doing wrong," replied Maria, "I should think with you; but we are employed as propriety and circumstances require, and certainly in a very innocent occupation. The last two days it has been, indeed, impossible to attend to any thing else; but to-morrow I shall try to complete my task without so much talking and thinking about it; and perhaps I can get Emma to read to me."

Emma had firmly held her purpose; but let it not be supposed that she had withdrawn herself to a cloister or a hermit's cell, or even to her own chamber, during all this time. Sincerity is seldom ostentatious, and firmness is seldom boastful. Emma seemed to be going on with her ordinary occupations; she gave her opinion simply when asked for it, and cheerfully offered occasional assistance to her sisters: but her mind was evidently otherwise engaged. She shared not the interest of the scene. It cannot be denied that she was less gay than they, and may have felt a wish that she could share their pleasurable excitement, without the sacrifice of what she esteemed her duty.

"It is surely absurd in you," said Fanny to her one day, "to give up this ball, on purpose to make yourself singular. It will have a very odd appearance in the eyes of the world. I cannot think it right in one so young to make such a public display of religion, by acting differently from the rest of her family. Singularity always wears the appearance of pride; to say nothing of the pleasure you needlessly throw away."

"It cannot be making any display at all," answered Emma: "for as I am the youngest, it will naturally be supposed I do not yet go out; and in respect to singularity, mamma gave us our separate choice, and, I think, was by no means dissatisfied

with mine. Then for the pleasure, dear Fanny, I confess I should like it, if I could share it; but never in my life could I find pleasure in any thing while my heart was heavy, and my conscience ill at ease. If I felt as you do, I might perhaps go; but, feeling as I do, I should be miserable when I got there. You may, it is possible, be right in your determination, for I do not pretend to decide upon that point, or to be wiser than you. But of this I am certain, that I cannot be doing wrong in foregoing a pleasure that seems to me to be entirely at variance with my religious duties, and which would unfit me for the sacred ceremony in which I desire to participate. If my maturer judgment should discover me to have been needlessly scrupulous in this matter, the memory of it will at least not lie heavy on my bosom, when it will, probably, have weight enough without it. If I ever should have reason to smile at it as a childish weakness, I am sure I shall never have to blush at it as a sin. The veriest fool that follows the will of God, as far as his weakness can discover it, will gather the reward of wisdom; while the wiser one, who pursues his own, will reap but the meed of folly."

Maria had hitherto said very little upon the subject; yet there was an air that seemed to say, I am wiser than either of you. The temptation of giving words to her wisdom now became too great to be withstood. "Nobody," she said, "can think it right to pursue their own will in opposition to the will of God; but it is the part of discretion and good sense, to distinguish between a right principle and a needless singularity. We have been very religiously brought up, and accustomed to attend to all our duties: I therefore do not see why we should be so very ill prepared for receiving the Sacrament, even

if we have not time to think of it, particularly this week: but, for my part, I shall find time. There is no harm, that I can see, in dancing, and there is no harm in dressing, and there is no harm in mixing with other people for a few hours' recreation: if we make a sin of what in itself is not so, the fault must be our own. I can be just as religious in a ball-room as in my own chamber, if I please. God has nowhere bidden us to withdraw from the ordinary occupations of life, and become nuns and hermits, that we may be more meet to serve him. We should rather learn to resist temptation in the world, than fly from it. I do not mean to suppose those who act thus conscientiously, are absolutely wrong; but it is to be regretted that good people have not better judgment, but must be running into extremes. I should not exactly say that Emma does wrong; but I think it would be more proof of sense, to do as other people do, at least till she is older."

"Indeed," answered Emma, "I had rather act than talk about it; and I would rather prove my want of sense by acting against the opinions of the world, than my want of principle, by acting against my own conscience. I am not sure enough to like to argue: but I am sure enough to know what to do. There is a world, that, in my baptism, I have promised neither to follow, nor be led by. Now, I do not know what that can be, unless it be the doing what others do, when in my conscience I feel and believe I should do otherwise."

"Well, well," said Maria, "I do not wish to persuade you. If we all do what we think right, we shall all do well; because nothing more is required of us. If I thought as you do, I would act as you do; for I am as much determined as yourself to go to the Sacrament on Sunday; and I dare say, when

Sunday comes, I, who have been innocently enjoying myself, shall be just as fit as you, who have condemned yourself to a week of thoughtfulness and self-denial. We shall see. Will you read to me something serious, while I work the silver into this bit of gauze? It does not need any thought, and I am quite at liberty to listen."

"That I will do with pleasure," said Emma; and the conversation was for that time superseded by the reading of the Communicant's Companion. I cannot be very exact as to the time, but I think this conversation passed sometime on the Thursday evening. Meanwhile the preparation advanced rapidly: Fanny's spirits grew lighter, as the day approached: all her walk became dance, and all her speech became song; so light seemed her heart and so gay. It appeared to me that Maria's was not so. She frequently kept silence while Emma read, and seemed to listen attentively; but it had rather the appearance of depressing than of soothing her spirits. She grew pettish, found fault with her thread; broke her needle: wished she could afford to buy her dresses; complained of the misery of being born without fortune; said the ribbons did not match, and the gloves did not fit. One moment Fanny's high spirits fatigued her: it was quite silly in her to be so elated about a foolish ball. The next moment Emma's gloomy silence depressed her. Why did she spoil every body's pleasure?—there was no amusement in going and leaving her at home.

"To-morrow night at this time!" cried Fanny, as she danced gaily round the room. "I wonder whom I shall dance with first. I won't dance at all unless I get a good partner; it makes one look so foolish. I should like to know how the Miss D****s will be

dressed : they are such pert, silly girls, it would be provoking to appear in worse style than they do."

"O, as to that," answered Maria, "I am not at all anxious. I should be very sorry to be jealous of any body. I am sure I do not go to the ball to show myself, but merely for the pleasure of dancing. Indeed I shall be quite glad when it is over, that I my return to more rational pursuits. One must do as other people do, but really it is a great sacrifice of time. I would much rather stay at home."

"Then why, dear Maria, do you not stay at home? I am quite sure mamma would be content to hear such a determination, and would not press your going even now," said Emma.

"Or rather," exclaimed Fanny, "why do you try to sit on two stools at once, to the manifest danger of going to the ground between them? Whether it will be more rational to go or to stay at home, I really have not time to consider; but I am sure it must be right to do one or the other; and you do not seem in the humour for either. I think it is quite wicked to be reading and talking of sacred things, as you and Emma have been doing all this day, in the midst of such occupations. It has served no purpose, but to put you out of humour with yourself, and make you disagreeable to every body. It would be much better to give yourself up to pleasure this week, and put off those subjects till a more proper season. There's a time for all things. Come, let me just put these wreaths round your hair, to see which looks best. O, how sweetly!—I wish to-morrow was come."

Maria rose, and went to the glass. "Well, but, Fanny, I cannot wear this; it does not become me, I wish you would let"—

"Well, but, Maria, that does not signify, as you do not go to show yourself, you know; and"-----

I am sorry, that having forgotten to observe the timepiece, I cannot inform my readers how long it took the ladies to settle a difference of opinion, respecting these same ornaments. But I dare say the venter knows how long he stood in the cold hall, waiting till his goods were returned to him.

The date of the first invitation had now arrived: when the dressing began, I am at some loss to decide. I might allege arguments to prove it commenced over night: or probably there might be a sort of rehearsal. It is impossible to know exactly, what one only hears through a wall. It does not signify, for certainly the ladies were *not* dressed in the morning. The time came, however, that they were dressed, and, as I believed, extremely well. And if the flush of pleasure on the cheek; and the sparkling of expectation in the eye, be proofs of happiness, I never looked upon a happier pair.

"Does my Emma repent her choice?" said Lady S. to the youngest girl, as she sat in her plain morning dress before the fire, between her gay and happy sisters; one hand dropping the half-closed book upon her knee, the other hand pressed upon her lips, in the attitude of one who is not quite so happy as she meant to be.

"I am not sure, mamma, whether I do or not—I shall be glad when you come back."

"Well, never mind, dear," said the good-natured Fanny, "you will be wiser another time. I wish the carriage would come. The Miss D****s will go in their own carriage, of course; I suppose almost every one will have their own carriage but ourselves. That is not particularly pleasant, I must

confess ; but it will be dark, and perhaps no one will observe what we come in."

"And it does not signify, if they do," replied Maria ; "I should be ashamed to feel any of that sort of pride. We are of higher birth than they are, though not so rich."

"And pray, dear Maria," said Lady S., "what may be the difference between the pride that is mortified at being poorer, and the pride that is gratified at being greater, than others?"

"Pride is a sin, I know," answered Maria, "however excited, and by whatever fed ; and yet it does not exactly seem to me the same thing. If I should blush at being seen in a hack carriage, were other girls are in their own, it must be an emotion of mortified pride, and, therefore, is a sinful emotion : whereas, if I should feel pleasure in hearing you announced as my Lady, while their mothers are introduced as plain Mrs. it would be"——

"An emotion of gratified pride ; and, therefore, as sinful as the other, because the offspring of the self-same passion."

"But, mamma, it is impossible to keep off all such thoughts from our minds, when we come in competition with other people, on occasions in which every one is valued according to their exterior advantages."

"And, therefore, it is that such occasions are unfavourable to that subjugation of sinful passion, which is the Christian's aim. But I hear the carriage."

A look of thoughtfulness passed over Maria's brow, as if she recollected something : but the desired moment had arrived, and they all stepped into the hired carriage. I thought Fanny looked at it with more than common observance ; but this might be fancy.

I now find myself under very considerable difficulty. Most story-tellers know what passes in their absence, and can relate without either seeing or hearing, even to the most secret thoughts and feelings of their characters; I am prohibited from telling any thing but what I hear. What is to be done? The carriage drove off, and I remained at home—how, then, could I hear what followed?

The hired carriage had driven off: the large hall door had been closed by the house-maid; for the footman of course was gone. The same inelegant substitute brought up two solitary-looking tea-cups, in company with the undress tea-pot, and a kettle of water, that in the universal hubbub, had neglected to boil itself: and in silent thoughtfulness, Miss Emma and myself sat down, to what is commonly called an uncomfortable tea. What she was thinking of I cannot determine. My thoughts had gone to Mrs. Askill's by a nearer road, and saw the carriage stop at the door after much contention of wheels, horses, and coachmen, whose sense of proprietorship made them dispute precedence with the hack. I saw the ladies ascend the stairs into the large uncarpeted room; of which the present coldness was only made tolerable, by anticipation of future warmth. I saw—what they who are familiar with it need not to be told; and they who are not, will not perceive the merit of my description.

Meantime the tea hour had passed, and we prepared to amuse ourselves: I took my drawing, and Emma proposed to read to me. The book proved interesting, and gave rise to much animated conversation; in which the carriages, and their contents, and the ball-room, into which they had been emptied, were alike forgotten. Emma grew gay and playful; the hours passed quickly; and when she took leave

of me for the night, there was upon her countenance a look of such serene enjoyment, as bespoke a spirit satisfied, and a mind at peace.

I had a task to perform, and therefore sat out the lingering hours of night, till, far upon the advance of morning, the revellers returned. The first question, of course, was respecting the pleasantness of the fête; to which exclamations of delight were the quick response. More there was no need to ask; all were in too much hurry to give the answers, to pay any regard to the questions. As they both talked at once, it would be impossible to repeat the conversation; but on most points of discussion, I perceived considerable difference of opinion. Maria, who had by far the most attractive person, thought the gentlemen extremely polite and attentive. Fanny denounced them all as bears and boobies. Fanny wondered the Miss D****'s should be so much admired, when they were decidedly plain. Maria was satisfied that they were not admired, but courted only because they were rich. Maria thought it quite impertinent in the Miss Somebodies to be more plainly dressed than others, when they were known to be rich: Fanny thought it equally impertinent in the Miss Nobodies to be better dressed than others, when they were known to be poor. Fanny complained of the rudeness of some one in attempting to stand above her in the dance; Maria complained that some one else had complained of her rudeness, in attempting to stand above them; and both were resolved to retaliate another time. Fanny was vexed, because she did not dance with the persons she wished to dance with; and Maria was vexed, because, when she had danced with the persons she wished to dance with, they thought proper to dance

with somebody else, that she desired they should not dance with.

On the whole, as far as by listening I could learn, every body had done something they had better not have done, or worn something they would have been better without; or said something, not quite within the pale of good-breeding, and good sense. But these were specks upon the evening's brightness; the gratifications were exquisite, and the pleasures out of number. Fanny was never so happy in her life, as when Mr. C. left Miss D—— to sit with her; though, but to tease Miss D., she would rather have been rid of him. Maria was enchanted to hear Lady W. say the Miss S.'s were the best dressed girls in the room; and wonder who they employed. Both ladies were delighted they had chosen to wear pink, when they saw the vulgar Miss Thompsons were in blue. In short, time would fail to tell out the list of pleasures; and declaring they never were so happy or so tired in their lives, to which last assertion their pallid cheeks and rayless eyes sufficiently subscribed, the young ladies retired to their room. I listened, for now the deeper secrets of the fête were to be disclosed. It was here that, restraint thrown off, the compliments were all repeated; the excited passions all exposed; the jealousies and mortifications confessed: the triumphs acted over again, and the satire repeated with redoubled zest. But far be it from me to betray the truths disclosed, and the secrets laid open, in the careless confidence of private converse and sisterly confidence. If any one of my readers has been a partner in any conversation carried on under similar circumstances, she has but to recall it to be perfectly in the secret of this.

The breakfast stood long, in patient order on the table, the ensuing morning. The sun was midway

in his short wintry course before the slumberers awakened, or, I should rather say arose—for wake they surely did not. These young people had not yet been long enough practised in the hard service of dissipation, to feel no morning consequence of the night's exertion; and they came forth at length with looks as well as words of weariness, languor and exhaustion; experiencing, though they probably neither understood the feeling, nor made the reflection, that, as there are more ways than one of being intoxicated, so there are others besides the wine-drinker, who are doomed to experience all the misery of getting sober. During the remainder of the morning, they dozed upon the chair, or lounged upon the sofa, the discussion of the night being occasionally renewed. But neither the pleasures, nor the pains, nor the flattery, nor the neglects, were so fully appreciated as they had been: distance and the mists of lassitude had something lessened the distinctness of these receding objects. After dinner, Fanny gave herself up freely to the weariness she felt. Maria kept up an ineffectual struggle to read a book that seemed equally determined not to be read, if I might judge from the propensity it showed to close itself in her hands. Whether thinking, dreaming, or reading, however, the mind's occupation was one and the same; as was clearly proved, by the occasional remarks that came from the lips of each, evincing that the intermediate aberrations of the mind had extended no farther, than from coaches to complexions, from bracelets to quadrille tunes.

In the evening Lady S. requested some conversation with her daughters, respecting their intention for the morrow; observing that as in conformity with her intention declared on the preceding Sabbath, she had neither spoken to them on the subject,

nor interfered with their wishes during the week, so it now became necessary to renew the question. The second invitation yet remaining to be attended to, and the hour being near at hand she desired to know which of her daughters intended to accompany her to the altar on the following morning.

The young people had too much right feeling to make any attempt to avert the subject, or show unwillingness towards it: but there was something in their looks and manner that plainly said the subject was ill-timed—that would have asked, if it might be, a more convenient season. But this could not be—Lady S. was patiently looking towards Fanny, as the eldest for reply. Fanny rubbed her eyes, and stretched her limbs, and seemed to be looking about for the senses that were not immediately forthcoming: at length she said—

“I have never had but one intention, mamma; it is that which I declared at first, and I have seen little cause to change it. I knew that whatever occupies my mind strongly, engrosses it fully. I knew very well, that besides being so much occupied with the actual employments of the week, my spirits would be too much elated for any thing like serious reflection: in short that the thing would be too much in my head to admit of graver matters, and I knew equally well, that when the ball was over, I should be tired and asleep as I am now; and that the same images would remain on my imagination, though receding now, as they were before advancing. And, if I thought this at first, I am now but the more convinced of it. I have not had a thought of any thing but pleasure the whole week; except to feel impatient at Maria's interruption of our occupations with subjects, that, at another time, I should have liked as well as herself. And now that all is over,

there needs no examination to teach me that I am not prepared for receiving the Sacrament. I have not felt a feeling, nor thought a thought, nor spoken a word to-day, but those of vanity, rivalry, and folly. I am not so insensible of the sacredness of heavenly things, as to intrude myself on a rite so holy, in such a dress as this: and besides that I do not feel ready, I have no inclination to it: it is not in unison with my present feeling. I am not in the humour—I never can presume to offer to God heartless and unwilling service. But you know, mamma, I never meant to go to the Sacrament to-morrow. I shall wait another opportunity."

"Do you know that you shall have one, Fanny?"

"Yes—that is—no, mamma, I do not exactly know it. But I may fairly presume so. I have not reason to think otherwise—in all probability—I am young and well."

"I will not make trite remarks upon the uncertainty of life and the deceptiveness of health, Fanny; we all know it, and we none of us believe it: and when any die before they expect it—and who, with some few exceptions, do not die before they expect it?—there is as much surprise as if it had never happened to any one before. But, my child, allowing it probable, would you stake your eternal welfare on a probability?"

"No: but, mamma, you have always taught me that my salvation does not, cannot depend upon an outward ceremony; my taking the Sacrament can no more make me fit to die, than my not taking it, can exclude me from the realms of bliss."

"That is true, my love; and you are neither the more nor the less prepared to die, for having partaken of the Lord's Supper. It is not, as some suppose, the make-weight of our insufficient merit, nor

the sponge that wipes out the record of our sins. But what then is it? If not the preparation for the feasts of heaven, it is the emblem, the earnest, the beginning of them: you come to the one to profess yourself an aspirant to the other; the same claim that is pleaded here, must be pleaded there: the same emblem of the marriage-garment has been used for both, and the thing which it pictures is in both the same. If you are not fitted for the one, you are not fitted for the other. If you have put it out of your power conscientiously to present yourself at the Lord's table upon earth, could you expect admittance to his presence above? If this, his invitation, be refused, how could you receive the messenger that should bid you to his marriage-feast in heaven?—'I pray thee have me excused, I have been engaged in other matters.' The plea has served you now; you are excused: you were free to choose whether you would accept his gracious bidding: you have chosen, and it seems that all is well. You have deliberately unfitted yourself for serious thought; and by your own confession, made yourself at once incapable and indisposed to the commemoration of his love, and the participation of his blessings; and in this state of conscious unfitness, you mean to go to rest to-night; and you will lie down to sleep in peace and confidence, as if nothing were the matter. But, my child, there is a feast in heaven prepared for those who are the children of God. What if the messenger be sent to-night to say that all is ready, and your hour of admission or rejection is at hand: that the decisive moment has arrived for you, which must determine your doom through all eternity? 'I have been engaged in other matters'—will the plea serve you then? Yes, then, as now, you will be excused, indeed: but the door will

be closed and made fast for ever; and she who was not ready, must remain without. Is it not so, Fanny?"

"Undoubtedly, mamma, it is: and I should hold myself unfit indeed to die to-night: I can scarcely suppose myself prepared to appear before the throne of God in heaven, when I cannot venture to present myself at his table upon earth."

"Then did I say amiss, Fanny, when I said, you were willing to stake your eternal welfare on a mere probability—a probability, as far as you can see, or know, or calculate? With God there are no probabilities, because there are no uncertainties. But in human language, and in earthly seeming, you say it is not probable you shall die to-night; and with this you can content yourself; and on this you can go happily to rest—and with this you will wake cheerfully to-morrow, and the next day; and the next you will remain the same perhaps; deferring, postponing, putting aside the invitations, the commands of Him to whom you have professed to devote yourselves, for the sake of those things you have promised to renounce. Whether you go to the Sacrament to-morrow or not, may be of no consequence to your salvation. It is not because you do not receive it, that you are unprepared to die; it is because you are unprepared to receive it, unfit to receive it, indisposed to receive it. Consider seriously how long it is wise to remain so, in a state of being where the youngest and the strongest is as the brief herbage of the field, that grows up to-day, and to-morrow is cut down and withered. And what does Maria intend?"

Maria hesitated: her tone of confidence was something lowered, and her wisdom seemed not quite so eager to express itself as it had been: yet still she kept her purpose, and said she saw no reason for

declining to accompany Lady S. to the Sacrament on the morrow, if she herself saw none.

"What I see is a small matter, dear Maria—but do you feel none?"

Maria again hesitated and stammered, but still said, "No."

Lady S. seemed surprised, and for a moment embarrassed, as if not knowing how to reply to an answer she had not expected: she then said, "Have you examined your own heart, Maria, after the manner enjoined you, to see if there be reason or not?"

"I cannot pretend," answered Maria, "that I have made any special examination, or any particular preparation for this holy ceremony. I meant it; but I have not had time. I was not aware that I should be too much elated yesterday, and too much exhausted to-day, to apply my mind to any thing. But after all, there is something very pharisaical in the idea of preparing ourselves, as if the formality of a week's preparation, as it is called, a few prayers and a little reading, could be of any value in the sight of God, or by any means recommend us to his favour. We ought always to be prepared; and therefore I conclude I am so, without"——

"You have come to the conclusion by a short road, Maria; but the language of Scripture gives neither invitation, nor permission, nor a welcome to any one, who, without examination, takes this for granted. But since you are so confident of your own state, I must suppose you have some grounds for being so. I would ask you first, whether you do truly repent of your former sins?"

"Of course I do."

"But have you inquired of yourself what they are?"

"Not particularly. I know I must have sinned frequently, and of course am sorry to have done so."

"To be sorry is to feel pain: to repent is to be grieved, ashamed, distressed. Can you have felt this without knowing for what? And another part of repentance is, that you determine to lead a new life. Have you made any such determination?"

"I do not know, mamma, in what I am to amend?"

"And how can you know, my child, if you have not inquired? And if you can perceive nothing in which you can amend, how can you repent of any thing? It is sufficiently plain that these are but empty words to you. Yet these things you will profess when you approach the table. The next requisition is, that you have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death. A lively faith, to take no more than the common meaning of the word, must be an active, animated, conscious thing, something that gives signs of life. It cannot be a vague belief laid up in the bosom so closely, that even to yourself it makes no difference of sensation whether it be there or not. A thankful remembrance of Christ's death cannot, in common sense, be a total forgetfulness of it. Now, my dear girl, cast back your thoughts upon the transactions of the last week up to this very hour, and say, have you believed, have you remembered, have you been grateful?"

"Mamma, I am sure I believe these things to be true, for it never came into my mind to doubt them. I hope I am grateful, as I surely must be, for such great mercies; and as to remembering, my mind, as I confessed before, has been too full of other matters to think much upon the subject this week; but I suppose"——

“My dear Maria, you speak as if you did not know the meaning of words. You suppose you have a grateful remembrance of things of which you never think: you are sure you believe, what it never came into your head to doubt, and of course not to examine. And these things you so certainly believe, and are so certainly grateful for, are nothing less than the eternal interests of your immortal spirit; the mercy that has pardoned, the sacrifice that has redeemed, the love that has suffered for sinners; and other matters can so engross your mind, as to exclude the thought of them entirely. And what matters? The vainest and emptiest pursuits of a vain and empty world: the merest trifles of a life, whose most important concerns are themselves but trifles, in comparison with these things so easily displaced. This, Maria, is neither to believe, nor remember, nor be grateful. It is to forget at once the mercies of God, and your own need of them; to put him most ungratefully out of mind; and virtually to disbelieve the consequences of doing so. Is there no anger in your heart for others' wrong—no pride seeking to gratify itself at others' expense; nor envy of one who has the advantage; nor contempt for one whom you surpass; no rivalry, contention, or ill-nature? Are love and charity the feelings of your heart towards all; and are they the feelings you have endeavoured to deserve of all? Have you been as careful to avoid every thing that might excite unholy passions in the bosom of others towards you, as in your own towards them? Have you tried to excite envy, jealousy, and pride, or to prevent it? Excited, was it pain or pleasure to you to see others so suffer and so sin? Examine your feelings for the last few days, nay, your words only during the last twenty-four hours, by the beau-

tiful description of charity in the xiiith of Corinthians, and say if it be true, that you are in love and charity with all men."

"By such an interpretation I certainly am not; but I wish no harm to any one."

"It is God's interpretation, not mine; and it appears that of all you take for granted, nothing is the fact."

"You advise me, then, not to go to the Sacrament to-morrow?"

"That I would still leave to yourself. I would not lead you superstitiously to suppose, that by going in this state to the Sacrament, you place yourself in worse condition than you are in if you stay away. For whether when bidden you refuse to come; or whether coming, you refuse to wear the dress appointed for the guests, the act of disobedience is pretty much the same. But as the case appears with you at this time, I would rather see you, self-convicted and ashamed, retiring from the table as an unmeet guest, than in bold, self-confidence, coming forward to offer to God the little remnant of your heart that the world has not engrossed; the refuse of time and spirits you have been able to snatch from the exhaustion of pleasure, professing things you do not mean, and asking blessings you cannot in conscience expect to receive. He to whom it was said, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither?' had no better portion in the feast, than they who sent excuses."

"I need scarcely ask my Emma's determination."

"Indeed, mamma," answered Emma, "you have much need to ask, or rather to instruct me; for I am much in doubt. I have given a large portion of time this week to the examination of my own heart, and I find little in it that encourages me to go. I have

been listening attentively to all you have said to my sisters, and have heard much that condemns me also to absence from this holy ceremony. With all my endeavours to keep in mind my Saviour's mercies, I am perpetually forgetting them; with all the warmth of gratitude I, at some times fancy that I feel, I am oftener disobedient, cold, and neglectful. And though I should say, I believe in Christ, yet when it appears how little consistent with that belief my actions are, it makes me doubtful whether I do so or not. If sorrow for sin be repentance, I have repented; but if, as you say, amendment be a part, I am not sure that I have repented: for, perhaps, I shall not amend: and with respect to the state of my passions, as it regards my fellow-creatures, all I have learned, by the close examination of every word and feeling, is, that my heart is full of selfishness and insubordination. I am certainly as little worthy to intrude myself as my sisters."

"My dear Emma, it was not to the worthy the invitation was sent, but to the sincere and contrite. You are right when you say you are no more worthy than your sisters to appear; but there is this difference. When two things were held out to you, you gave the preference to the invitation of your Lord; when you saw what occupations were likely to interfere with your devotion, you put them aside: when you perceived of what unhallowed passions your mind was susceptible, you avoided the occasions of exciting them. So far you proved an honest desire to partake worthily the benefits of this holy communion. The result of all your examination, and all your preparation, is, that you find yourself absolutely unworthy as to the past, and absolutely helpless as to the future. Such the result should be, and such it must be. But has this dis-

covery made you feel less disposed, or less desirous to go to the Sacrament ?”

“On the contrary, mamma, it makes me more anxious to go : for the deeper grows the consciousness of my ill-deserts, the more precious becomes every emblem of redeeming mercy, the more welcome every record and remembrance of Jesus’ love. If I before thought it desirable for me to be a partaker of the body and blood of Christ, and of the benefits received by them, I now know it to be necessary ; for I cannot do without it. Ill-dressed, unclothed, unfitted as I am, I should like to go and try if the Master of the feast will admit me, and help me to provide myself a better garment : for I believe that none but He can give it.”

“Then, my dearest Emma, though I do not tell you you are better than your sisters, or that your conduct this week is sufficient to prove the reality of your faith, or the sincerity of your professions ; I do not hesitate to advise you to do as you desire ; in humble confidence, that He who has invited you to his feast, will graciously receive you, and enable you to be what he requires.”

The Sabbath morning dawned with more than usual brightness. The three sisters went together to their parish church ; fancy might say the step of one was lighter than the rest ; certain it is, that one only accepted the INVITATION.

L E N T.

THE eye that has long been accustomed to look upon the scene around us, has become familiar with its minutest peculiarities, reconciled to its deformities, and sated with its charms, can form but a very imperfect idea of the effect of that same scene on one who has never looked on it before. It is thus in every thing ; we lose the general effect, in too close intimacy with the minute particulars. The painter feels this, when he has sat hour by hour over the laboured canvass, retouching every feature, measuring every line, till the effect as a whole is so entirely lost to him, that he is obliged to remove it for a time out of his sight, or have recourse to the judgment of another. The poet feels it, when having selected word by word the materials of his composition, and fitted them to the measure of his verse, he knows, that to his ear they harmonize ; to his perceptions they express the idea and excite the feeling he intends : but can very inadequately judge of the impression they will make on the mind of a reader, who, for the first time, comes to their perusal.

And such is the difficulty I often feel, when I go about to listen for others to what I can only hear for myself ; especially when it passes over my mind, that I am listening for those to whom nothing can appear under the same aspect in which it appears to me. Features of society that I have looked upon, till they seem to me too little prominent to excite attention, a young person, to whom the world is new, will likely fix upon as the objects of inquiry and sur-

prise : while those, that in minuter intimacy I have discovered to be curious and important, they, in their hasty and unpractised glance, will either not perceive, or feel but little interest in. And thus, while I am carefully, and, as I think, very interestingly, telling stories and multiplying words about things, that, for what they know, may have happened in the moon, they are wishing, wondering, and not altogether pleased, that I never happen to see, or see under so different a shape, the objects that most puzzle and surprise them. It was under the burden of this very disturbing apprehension, I bethought myself for once to have recourse to memory for my tale, and relate what happened when I was as much a novice as my readers, and liable to as many mistakes as they possibly can be, respecting the things I saw. But then my readers must be needs forewarned, that my observations in this paper are not required to be correct; what I thought wrong was, in all probability, very right; what I thought inconsistent, might be most beautifully systematic, if I had had but the sense to perceive the due connexion of things. And as all wonder is the offspring of ignorance—ignorance of what things are, if not of what they ought to be—any surprise that I may express, is to be, of course, attributed to my own inexperience at the time.

It happened once—that is the genuine way of beginning an account of things that never happened—but my readers may depend upon it this did happen some time, though I find it inconvenient to say when. It was when the habits and practices of the world were known to me only through the newspapers that reported them, or the moral essays that abused them, or the novels that misrepresented them; the world, in which I had grown up, being no wider

than the walls of the paternal dwelling, and no more populous than the family that dwelt in it. What ideas or expectations I had formed through the medium of these informers of the busy scene of life, in which I have since so largely wandered, is not of importance to be told : my readers may be satisfied to know they were in every thing mistaken. Some time about the middle of March I was invited to spend a few weeks in London, where with all my ignorance, and all my prejudices full upon me, I found myself arrived at the given period. I was a Listener then as well as now ; then for myself, as now for others : and among an infinite variety of things, the following circumstances are in memory's record, as something that I heard.

"It is rather a dull time to bring a stranger to London," said Mrs. T*****, "because in Lent we see less company, and our public amusements are for the most part suspended. But after Easter we shall be particularly gay, and able to show you every thing."

"I should like to know, mamma," answered young Selina T., "why we may not as well live in Lent as we live all the rest of the year ; for I suppose we do not live irreligiously at any time ?"

"I am surprised to hear you speak thus, Selina," said her mother ; "I thought you had been taught to read your Bible, and attend your religious duties strictly ; I did not expect from you so ignorant a remark—I thought you knew"—I was considering of the probability that Mrs. T. had neglected to teach her daughter what she was surprised to find she did not know, when the lively Selina rejoined—

"O, yes ! dear mamma, I do know that in Lent we have no balls or plays : never ask more than twelve to dinner at once ; eat salt fish and pancakes,

and go to church in the week days. But I wanted to know the reason of it all ; I am sure there is nothing about it in the Bible, and I could not find it this morning in the prayer-book."

"Again, my dear, I must say you are very ignorant, if you do not know that the forty-days preceding Easter, are kept in commemoration of our Saviour's fast of forty-days, in the lonely wilderness, where, for our sakes, and for our example, he hungered and thirsted, and"——

"O, dearest mamma ! I know all that of course," answered Selina, impatiently ; "but I want to be told, what that has to do with balls and dinner parties, and pancakes, and plays ?"

"I should think that too obvious to need explanation, my love," said Mrs. T. I thought so too ; and seeing her hesitate, I had almost a mind to propound the matter myself, so simple, and so certain seemed to me the mode of explanation, and so clear to myself was my own understanding of it. I soon had reason to rejoice that I refrained my lips, when I perceived not only the difficulty of the exposition, but my own mistakes upon the subject.

Mrs. T. took off her thimble, primmed her pleasant face into the length of gravity, bade her daughter to be serious, and she would explain to her what she ought to have known long ago. I thought she ought, little suspecting that I did not know myself.

There were not wanting symptoms in the old lady's manner, which might have excited suspicion that she did not know ; but that was impossible : the appearance must of course have proceeded from my want of knowledge of the world. Still, there was a long pause. The old lady drew towards her the large Bible, and the little prayer-book, that lay on the table, and put them carefully one upon the other,

the latter at the top, ready for action. If so much preparation should seem extraordinary, be it remembered, that Mrs. T. had grown up at a period, when, however much ladies might think upon religion, they were very little accustomed to talk about it; and few persons in the parish, except the parson, were expected to have an opinion upon the subject, much less to explain one. Mrs. T.'s exordium proved nothing the worse for the delay. She began by commenting with feeling and simplicity, on the narration of our Saviour's sufferings, the object of his mission upon earth, the awful consummation of his errand that is at this season celebrated, and all the heart-affecting circumstances, with which the season stands associated in the mind of a believer.

"And does not my Selina see," she added, "why such a period should be marked, and kept by those so deeply interested in its events?"

"Assuredly, mamma, I see it should be kept. We commemorate the deeds of earthly greatness; we celebrate the era of our country's freedom; we remember the birth-time and the death of those we love. If good or ill betide us, we engrave, as it were, the date upon our hearts, to be no more erased, and thought recurs to it as duly as the day returns. It would seem strange, indeed, if of all important eras, the most important was alone forgotten: if of all great events, the greatest remained without appropriate celebration. Assuredly, mamma, it should be kept—but how?"

"By means appropriate to itself. Now, what does it seem to you that they would be?"

Selina hesitated; yet her countenance betrayed an emotion that said she knew: nature and feeling were, in this instance, better prompters than the

wisdom of the schools. She had not reflected on it before, but she felt what she had not learned, and replied—

“In common sense, mamma, it surely should be this. Jesus suffered for our sins, died for our sins, and rose again to free us from our sins. We were the cause of his suffering, and, therefore, should be sad at the remembrance; we were the gainers by it, and, therefore, should be glad and grateful. But as sin was the mischief, and pardon of sin the gain, it is natural that our joy, and our sorrow too, should express itself by abstaining from whatever is sinful, or can by any means be offensive to Him, whose suffering and death we at this time commemorate: and I would add, that we should keep it as a season of humiliation for our past sin, and of prayer and preparation for future amendment.”

“You could not have spoken better, my child. And besides this purpose of preparation for Easter, it is required of us to follow the footsteps of our Lord; and as he fasted forty days in the wilderness, so we have an equal period of self-denial appointed us in imitation of his.”

“I do not exactly see how the purpose is answered by it, unless the ball and the theatre be the sins from which we are to abstain; and dining with twelve people, instead of twenty be the self-denial, and”—Selina’s vivacity was fast getting the better of her previous earnestness; but recollecting herself, she gravely added, “But that, mamma, is confessing that these are sinful practices, which you know they are not.”

“The innocent amusements of the world cannot be so: but”—Mrs. T. hesitated; moved the prayer-book off the Bible, turned it the other side upwards,

and seemed at a loss for words. I thought I could have helped her, but I did not. "In the first place, these engagements occupy our time, and consequently leave us less for devotional duties: then they occupy our mind, and consequently interfere with the serious thought that becomes the season; and then it cannot be denied, that though innocent amusements on the whole, there is an awful inconsistency in the gayety and forgetfulness of such pursuits, when brought in near contact with the events at this season, recalled and pictured out afresh to our imagination. You cannot, in the excitement of the theatre, think of your Saviour's dying groan; you cannot, in the hubbub of a crowded room, be in the steps of him, who, as he sat at meat with those he loved, was ever teaching them his Father's law, or speaking with them of his approaching expiation. Therefore it is not hard to understand, that, at a season when you desire to remember these things and to feel them, you must in some measure change your occupations."

I was considering how far the above ingredients might, if properly compounded, make a sin, when Selina ended at once my doubts and the conversation, of which she was manifestly tired, by the following exclamation:—

"O! yes, mamma: I am perfectly satisfied of what you mean, and beg your pardon for teasing you with such foolish questions. I see exactly, that things which are perfectly proper, during the three hundred and twenty-five days in which we forget our Saviour's sufferings, would be very inconsistent during the forty days, in which we desire to remember them, and since Jesus for our sakes at this time debarred himself of nature's first necessities, and endured sufferings from which nature shrinks, we

should, in imitation of him, refrain from what we most delight in, and submit to what is most disagreeable to us : that is, we should give no balls, eat salt fish and pancakes, and go to church."

Mrs. T. smiled at her daughter's mirth, and possibly felt her satire, but contented herself with saying she was too giddy.

I was a thinker then as well as a listener, though not much of a talker, as may have been perceived. Reflecting, after I retired, upon this conversation, I felt angry with Selina's ridicule of her mother's sensible remarks. The truth of what had been said respecting Easter, the propriety of keeping it, and the manner of keeping it, had deeply impressed my mind. I felt ashamed that I had never before so seriously considered it ; and a feeling of pious joy animated my bosom, that for the first time in my life, I had come into a family where I should see it observed so consistently and so devoutly. How could Selina, I thought, who has been brought up in the constant observance of so excellent a principle, have remained till this time without a perception of its suitability ?

I arose the next morning in a mood of more seriousness than I remember to have felt before, prepared, as I thought, and willing, to make any sacrifice required of me by religion and the church at such a season.

After the usual breakfast the carriage came to take us to morning prayers, and we rolled off to a fashionable chapel at the west end of the town. A few carriages brought a few people on the same errand : the chapel was so warm, and the seats were so well lined, and the cushions were so near the elevation of the knees, and the reader made such admirable haste, that, contrary to my previous pre-

judice, I found there was very little trouble in a week-day service; and so we rolled back again, and went about our usual occupations.

"Selina, dear, you must not be idle," said Mrs. T., "you know what a deal you have to do, and this is the last leisure week: there is scarcely a day in which we are not engaged after Easter, and our mornings will be occupied in showing our friend about London. If you do not make use of this idle time to prepare your things, you will be sadly hurried."

"O, dear me! I am hurried enough as it is," said Selina. "I have saved such a quantity of things to do this week, that I never shall get through them. It is a comfort, at least, that there are a few weeks in the year in which one has time to one's self. But did you not want me to write those cards this morning?"

"O, yes! indeed you must," answered her mother. "For to-morrow the dressmaker will be here all the morning, measuring and taking order for your spring dresses; and next day I have appointed the upholsterer about the furniture, and all the house will be in confusion; on Saturday you must go to the dentist. I must get all these things done this week, for I shall have no time after Easter."

"But for what days are the cards to be sent out, mamma?"

"That I must think of, if I can find time to think. There is the 1st, the 6th, the 10th. Having no parties in Lent makes them come so thick afterwards, it is scarcely possible to find days enough."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a lady dressed in black. She made a visit of the usual length, during which she made a great many ill-natured remarks; repeated several slanderous

anecdotes, and expressed herself with much bitterness against some persons who had offended her. As soon as she was gone, Selina said—

“Mamma, what is Miss Tibbs in mourning for?”

“It used to be the custom, my dear, and it is still retained by some persons who are particular, to wear mourning in Lent.”

“Nay,” said Selina, “if Miss Tibbs is so particular in keeping Lent, she had better abstain from speaking ill of her neighbours, which is the thing she most delights in, and forgive her enemies, which is the thing she is least disposed to.”

The days passed on. Every body ate and every body drank, and every body enjoyed themselves as usual. Two or three people came some days to dinner, and the entertainment was the same, and the conversation was the same, for any thing I could see, as if they had been twenty: and on the days we dined alone, the objects that occupied our attention were still the same. We talked of the things we did not do, and arranged plans for doing them as soon as we might. I heard no more of Jesus, of his sufferings, or his death; of sin, or its consequences, or its pardon; nor, as far as I could perceive, was any one thinking about them. This probably proceeded from my own inexperience and want of knowledge of the world. It could not really be, as it seemed, that the season, so *properly set apart*, as Mrs. T. had said, for meditation, penitence, and prayer, should be passed over without any extra-serious thoughts, of any kind whatever, upon the events at this period commemorated. Certain it is, that no more allusion was made to them in word or deed, except that some one now and then took occasion to say, it was very unlucky it happened to be Lent.

"Mamma, which night are we going to the Oratorio?" said Selina, on Friday morning.

"I believe, my dear, we shall have a box to night; but you will know when your papa returns."

On this subject I felt myself quite well informed. I had learned by the newspaper that the theatres are always closed during this season, except on Wednesdays and Fridays, when they are opened for the Oratorio, a sort of religious festival, as I conceived, by the names affixed to the performance, and by its being held on the same day of the week as the church prayers; days, I was aware, to which custom had affixed a peculiar sacredness. I was well pleased with what I heard; for as this amusement was not only allowed in Lent, but confined to it by peculiar appropriation, I certainly might there expect to find something of the devotion with which I had heard the season was to be hallowed.

The box was secured, the hour came, and we were duly adorned, and set off, as I supposed, to our devotions. My thoughts by the way were serious: they had not been used to be so; but what I had heard from Mrs. T. had made a strong impression on me; though I was effectually puzzled that it seemed to have so little affected any body else. I tried to compose my mind to feelings suitable to the occasion, though no one else in the carriage appeared to be doing so. But then they had been used to spend the Lent properly: I had hitherto neglected it; and the reflection perhaps caused me some feelings of regret and shame.

Shame, regret, and devotion, however, had no tickets of admission. I parted at the door with all of them, and became absorbed with such a sense of pleasure as was likely to possess a youthful mind,

on tasting for the first time of such an amusement. The splendour of the house, the brilliancy of the lights, the music of the full choir, so unlike to any thing I had heard before ; the gay appearance of the audience, where all without was prosperity and smiles, whatever might be beneath them : thoughts of sadness would have seemed to me a sacrilege within the compass of these walls, at least there was a world of joy. My reflections and feelings were absorbed in sensations of unmingled pleasure. I could not discern where vice and misery hid themselves in that gay crowd ; or I should rather say, why they presented their unblushing front, as if by acknowledged right they presided there. I could not guess how the hundreds of immortal beings were employed, who, to support a useless existence and fill up the measure of their crimes, were doing the drudgery of such an establishment. I knew nothing of all this—but ignorant as I was, and thoughtless as I was, I was startled from my delirium of enjoyment, when accompanied by tones from the orchestra that might seem to be the music angels sing, I heard these words, “He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He gave his back to the smiters.” I need not pursue the words, we know where they are, we know what they mean. Those deeply mysterious words, at which patriarchs and prophets wondered, which sinners treasure in their bosoms as a criminal the signet that is to stay his execution ; which the penitent weeps while he listens to, and triumphs while he weeps ; the words of God himself, the prophetic picture of the Saviour’s sufferings for a ruined, miserable world, for the world that at this season professed to commemorate his mercy and their own degradation—for the world at that moment assembled within those walls.

I looked at the person by whom the words were uttered; I looked at the audience by whom they were listened to; I marked the dazzling accompaniments of the scene. Nature and reason spake within me: for bribed, corrupted, spell-bound as they are, they will speak sometimes, if we will let them. The bold, unblushing front, the unshrinking eye: the immodest attire, the unhallowed air, on the one part; on the other, the expression of indifference or of emotions simply pleasurable, were so contrasted with the images those words brought like unwelcome spectres to my imagination, that at no moment of my life do I remember to have felt so involuntarily persuaded that these things were indeed but the fiction that they seemed: the tragic stories with which men amuse themselves.

The beings before me and around me, could they believe themselves the creatures for whom the Messiah had thus suffered? Was it they had done it, they had caused it; they at this very time professing to keep a fast in imitation of his sufferings, and humble themselves before him for their share of it? It was nonsense, it was absurdity: it was imposition that could not be passed upon a child, to suppose that they who sang, or they who listened, felt themselves to be the sinners that had been so redeemed. Had there been any bosom there to which the realizing sense had come, they would have drooped their heads for shame, and gone away. No—I am bold to say, that whatever it was before or after, the Messiah's sorrows were, at the moment, to every bosom there, a fiction; enhanced by the exquisite pathos of the music, a beautiful exciting, heart-affecting fiction; represented by the most degraded of mankind for the amusement of the gayest and most profligate. Yet hither we had presumed to bring the

word of God ; here we addressed Him with the cry for mercy, here we had his name resounded from unhallowed lips ; reverberating on unadoring hearts ; succeeded as quickly as the scene could change, by a heathen madrigal, sung by the same performers, in the characters of Ceres and Proserpine, in which Pluto received the orisons so lately offered in mockery to the God of heaven ; uttered in the same spirit, heard with the same feelings. We drop the picture. Satire grows grave when she touches on things like these ; and our readers will say we preach. If there be meaning in words, or sense in any thing, God's commandment was that night broken, and his name profaned ; and Christians were there to hear it, and were well pleased.

But to resume my story—A few days more, and the days of Lent were ended. The *imitation* of the Messiah's fast in the wilderness was completed ; the season of *humiliation* was accomplished, and we were all *prepared* for the approaching festival of Easter. The day of the Redeemer's death that ended our days of *mourning*, was decently observed in Mrs. T.'s family, as was also the Sunday, the commencement of our joy for his resurrection to eternal life, and our own in his. And what it before behoved us to remember, it now behoved us as quickly as possible to forget ; what was sin the week before the expiation was offered, was no sin as soon as it was accomplished ; there needed, indeed, the utmost ignuinity to make up for the time that had been lost. Miss Tibbs put off her mourning ; Mrs. T***** would have thought it quite methodistical to go to church in the week ; Selina honestly rejoiced that Lent came but once a year ; and I—I remembered, what I hope my readers may not have forgotten, the beginning of my story. I remembered Selina's igno-

rance, and no longer wondered ; for neither could I perceive the connexion between the season and its observances.

I remembered Mrs. T*****'s pious observations, and wondered what they could have meant ; for I had not seen a single illustration of them in the practices or occupations of the family in the interval. One good effect, however, came of my meditations : they put me on good terms again with myself : for whatever might be the intention in instituting this fast ; whether, that in order to our being made conformable to our Lord in his life, it was judged necessary that we should have a season of self-denial and abstraction from the ordinary occupations and innocent delights of life ; or whether, he having fulfilled for us the law, and by his sufferings done away the need of a similar penance on our part, this was rather meant as a time of grateful remembrance than of imitation ; a time of humiliation before God, and pious commemoration of his love. In either or in any case, it appeared to me that the intentions of the church had been as well fulfilled by my forgetfulness as by their observance of the season. Whatever mistakes may be in this comparative estimate of wrong, I beg may be attributed to my inexperience and ignorance of the world.

THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM.

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
And where shall Zion's songs again seem sweet?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leap'd before its heavenly voice?
HEBREW MELODIES.

I was travelling once over a distant land—a land it had been, by the way I travelled, of bleakness, and barrenness, and danger. If sometimes I had loitered where there were flowers budding, fair as the first and fairest of our Spring; while I yet waited in expectation of their blowing, I saw them wither in the sunshine, fade, and pass away. If ever, amid the parched and thirsty soil, I had looked upon the bursting of a pure, clear spring, quickly there came to it some unclean thing, and muddied and polluted, what had risen so pure. And often, as beneath some shadowing tree, I had laid down to rest, before I had prepared myself again to hasten forward, the cold north wind had come and stripped that tree, and robbed it of its beauty and its shade. It was a wretched land, and they that dwelt there were like the land they dwelt in. Their well-seeming virtues rarely bore the bloom they promised, but failed at the moment of expected fruition: their wisdom, however abounding it seemed to flow, flowed not far before it became mixed with error and empoisoned: their enjoyments were the evanescent verdure that could not outstand the first cold touch of sorrow. And surely I had felt

pity for them as I passed, and mourned that they had not a better land to dwell in.

Having travelled thus some considerable way, I reached a spot, seeming more fair for the rude path that led to it, and beautiful in the contrast of its fertility, with the coldness and barrenness of the land I had passed over. There was no barrier, that I perceived, between them; and yet were they distinct, as the darkness of night from the broad light of noon. Why the inhabitants of the adjacent country did not pass on to it, I perceived not: but I concluded it was appropriated property; the hereditary possession, probably, of a people too powerful to need a landmark, or an armed outwork against the encroachments of their neighbours. Certainly I saw that no desire was manifested, on either part, to take possession of the other's land; and, unequal as seemed to me, the destiny of each, each appeared contented to abide their portion. I entered with delight on the rich scenery of this pleasant land. I do not know that I need particularly to describe it. It was like the best spots in our native country: those that industry has toiled to cultivate, and some tasteful hand has taken pleasure to adorn. It was like to those wide estates, that, being appropriated to some powerful and rich possessor, who finds pleasure in them, and does with them what he will, manifest in every part the influence of his interference. It was no fairy land I speak of, where magic suns gave birth to golden fruits, or necromantic power charmed the elements to stillness. But it was one where forethought had provided every thing; caution had secured every thing, and whatever were the natural ills to which it lay exposed, some defence against their influence, or remedy for their mischiefs, had carefully been provided.

The blossoms of their gardens died like others, but their departing beauty left the fruit to ripen richly on the stem. The sun of their daytime went down like others, and often went down in clouds; but the damps of their night were like the waters of affliction to the bosom of submission, the better for its tears. When the tree that adorned it withered in the blast and passed away, there came a friendly watcher and planted another as lovely in its place. The menacing weeds sometimes came up, indeed; but quickly the eye of the inspector marked them, and put in his keen-edged tools to their destruction. Like our most highly cultured grounds, its paths were made straight, and its rough places were made smooth. The threatening tempest passed it over harmless, and the winds that rocked its habitations to their base, found them too strongly founded for destruction: the dwellers in them slept secure from danger.

The inhabitants of this happy region, I observed, were many; and they seemed to know the value of their estates. They did not live on them in idle luxury, waiting the productions of a soil that, rich as it was, would surely so have disappointed them; but they cultivated it in cheerful expectation of no uncertain harvest. Though they enjoyed its good in common, it was not in wild misrule, the lawlessness of promiscuous possession. Each one had his place, and each one had his task; and if the proportion of each was not the same, it showed a fair adjustment to his powers, his industry, or his deserts; it was enough to suffice him till time and circumstance should bring him elevation in the scale; there was enough for all; and all were secure that they should not be deprived of the possession, unless they willingly departed to some other residence.

When I had staid some time with this people, I found that they, too, had a character something in conformity to the features of their country. They evinced the infirmities and dispositions of other nations; and this appeared to be the chief taint that sullied the lustre of their state, and marred their happiness. Yet even this was not without a palliative and a corrective remedy: the laws were so good and the administration of them so good, the punishment ensued so quickly on misconduct, and the pardon so quickly on the effectual repression of the wrong, that order and peace were the general characters of the kingdom; notwithstanding the liability of its subjects to sin, and the frequent interruptions of their enjoyment by the obtrusion of their faults. I became, after a time, very anxious to know who these people were, and how they came to be in possession of so beautiful a territory, while all around it and about it, as I have told, remained so bleak, and so bare.

"Tell me," I said to one I thought could inform me, "from what great line of ancestry these people are descended: the children, doubtless, of some pristine hero, who conquered for them this pleasant land; or perhaps the generation of its first possessors, who, when the inhabitants of earth were few, found it and took possession, and by their industry and wisdom made it what it is, and bequeathed it, with all its blessings to their posterity?"

"This land," he answered, "was not originally theirs who hold it now: their fathers did not conquer it, their progenitors did not possess it. They dwelt yonder, in the lands you passed through."

"Indeed!" I said, "most happy are they, then in the exchange. But by what rich purchase is theirs?"

He answered, "It came not into their hands by purchase, but was the gift of our Sovereign Lord the King, who gave it to them and their heirs for ever."

"In reward for some important service?" I asked.

"None that I ever heard of," he replied; "it was confiscated property, and he gave it to whom he pleased."

"But who, then, and where, are the original possessors of these lands? Do they who planted yonder vines not gather of their fruits?"

"No," he rejoined, "nor may they who built those palaces dwell in them: nor may they who raised those altars, longer worship there. They were faithless, ungrateful traitors: they broke their pledged allegiance to the king, their persons were outlawed and attainted, and their estates forfeited. and what the fathers made themselves, the children have continued."

"What were the fathers before this happened?"

"The favourites of their prince—the best and best-beloved of all his realm. The highest in dignity, and the most happy in estate, every one of them could trace their ancestors by name to a period when ours were unheard of. Here, amid the blessings surrounding us, they lived secure, no man disputing their possession; for they had been its first possessors, the sole inheritors from remotest ages."

"And what are the children now?"

"Did you not see them," he replied, "loitering in helpless indigence on the confines of our territory? Come, and I will show you them."

We walked towards the way opposite to that by which I had entered; and observed, amid surrounding dreariness, a few miserable hovels, the

abodes of the wretched, as their appearance told : humanity was glad to see they were not more.

"Are these all that remain?" I said.

"No," answered my companion, "but they are all that reside in this part of the country, wandering round the dwellings that were once their own, where now they enter not."

I looked upon those miserable ruins of departed greatness, and saw, or fancied I saw, some traces of former greatness in their features : but it was so mixed with an expression of sordid wretchedness and abject acquiescence in disgrace, I could liken it only to the fallen statue, which the elements have discoloured, and the rank herbage overgrown, till we know not whether we really perceive, or do but persuade ourselves of its former beauty. Misery, guilt, and deep-written melancholy, there certainly were upon their fallow brows. In some, I could have believed it the melancholy of penitence and shame.

"The children of those once high in honour," I uttered, as I looked at them, "the certain claimants of that remote ancestry of which many are so proud! And do they want for any thing?"

"It is likely they want for every thing," my guide replied ; "for they have no possessions here or anywhere : they dwell upon the waste ; they have no country, and no friends, and scarce a home—none but those miserable huts."

I entered one of them where an aged man was sitting : older, he seemed, in misery than in years : and yet his head was grey, as sorrow's often is, before its time. The scanty hair upon his half-bared head was strikingly contrasted with the abundant fulness of the beard. His features were harsh ; there was vice in them, and there was misery ; but it was vice and misery that had done its work and gathered

its reward; and purposed no more, and feared no more, of either: poverty, abandonment, and despair, were the predominant characters of every thing in him and about him; excepting that there lay about his feet a group of children, whose sunny foreheads and deep hazel eyes glowed with the vigour of fresh existence, as yet unquestioning of weal and wo. And even to these, the long, falling line of the nose and forehead, and the shadowing eyelid that half veiled the oblong eye, gave such an expression of pensive melancholy, one might have fancied they borrowed their features from their fate.

I spoke to the old man softly, and said his store appeared a spare one; and something I said about the condition of his house, and the contrast with their former greatness, when in possession of the adjoining lands, which, as I was told, had been his fathers'.

"They tell me so," he said, "but they were never mine; and I do not want them; for I am going to my fathers, from whom the rapacity of those strangers took them."

"But I have heard that you forfeited them by rebellion, and were lawfully ejected?"

"It may be so—but I know nothing about it. Whatever happened, happened before I was born. Compelled to toil my life through for my bread, sometimes to beg it, ay, and sometimes to steal it, or forego it, I have had no time to inquire, and no one has cared to tell me.

"You do not seem so much concerned as I expected. Would you not like to enter again upon that pleasant land, and look at the dwelling of your fathers?"

"No one has invited me. *Concerned!* Is the loathed spider, think you, concerned when you wipe

it from your gilded cornices, and cast it out as a pollution? Is the hated reptile concerned when you put your foot upon it, as too vile to be sheltered even in your dust? What matters our concern?"

"But your children—perhaps the time may come—do you not wish?"

The old man raised himself from his seat, placed his back against the humid wall, his clenched hands resting upon the staff before him. "My children!" he interrupted me—"I have said I did not know. you say I do not care; but this I know; I love my children, miserable as I may be, and they are suffering, outcast, and despised. The land they dwell upon produces nothing; the returning seasons bear them nothing: look at them, unwashed, wretched, and starving. Perhaps if they knew what they are and what they might have been, they would try some means to be reconciled to their offended king. But who is to instruct them? Where are they to find him? They are born in misery, and they will die in ignorance, the innocent victims of their fathers' deeds, and no man comes to help them." He paused a moment—then, with increasing mournfulness, resumed: "The boastful inhabitants of yonder place talk much of their abundance. Proudly exulting in their unbought possessions, they cast our forlorn condition in our teeth, and weighing, our wretchedness against their bliss, bid us behold in it the issue of our fathers' crimes. I have said I do not know whether it be true. I do not know whether their land be as abundant as they say. How should I?—they have never imparted to me of its fruits. I do not know whether they are really the happy creatures they profess to be. How should I? They have never bidden me to their hearths. But if it be that their halls are so wide, and their harvests so rich,

and their government so beneficent as they say—ah! surely there should be room enough for these few poor children. But none will fetch them in.” The father’s voice grew hoarse with deepened emotion: the dark eyes of the children moistened with a tear; they knew not why, but that their father wept.

I could have wept too—but I replied, “Perhaps the prince your fathers so much offended, forbade your re-entrance on those lands: perhaps its new incumbents hold it on condition never to admit you; or surely they had not so long left you here unfriended?”

“It may be so,” the old man answered, fixing a look of lorn despair upon his children; paused a moment; then, as if a hopeful doubt had broken in upon his sadness, added, “I never heard it. I have heard he loved our fathers: they who love the fathers are not used to hate the children. It may be so—but when you go back again to yonder halls, if you see that there is any thing to spare; if there be room enough in their chambers, and food enough on their board, ask if they are forbidden to take in my few poor children.”

Readers, I have fulfilled my commission. If you were the possessors of some rich tenement, given by a sovereign, as in former times it often has been, the forfeited property of his traitor subjects, to those he makes his friends; while you enjoyed the gain of their disloyalty, should you feel no pity for their need? Should you leave their children to perish at your gates? I believe you would not. There is nothing more moving to our natural feelings, than to look on the residue of fallen greatness. If a suffering pauper be pointed out to us as the child of one who was of rank and birth superior to our own, a stronger emotion of pity is

excited for his degradation; for we contrast his fortunes with our own, and measure his fall as what ours might be. Still more, if you were the gainers by that change, and held the property that was once his father's would you not hold out to the deprived and degraded offspring, some pittance of your well-spared abundance? You would go out of those pleasant lands to the bleak forest I have described, to look for those poor children that were perishing on the waste, and bring them in, to live on your estates, and be at least your servants. Now believe me it is no fiction I have told.

Jehovah has a garden that he cultures with especial care, as unlike the heathen lands that lie around it, as the dwelling I have pictured to the country that was about it. He cast out in anger the original inhabitants, and put you in unearned possession of what once was theirs. A few of their outcast children, innocent of their father's sin, ignorant of the real cause of their degradation, and not knowing by what means to be reconciled to their offended Maker, are straying about your streets, and lurking round your doors, and you have taken no notice of them. You have not gone to their dwellings to offer them a portion of the word of eternal truth, on which you feed so richly. And you have not sought out their children to separate them from their miseries and rear them to a better state, before habit has confirmed them in their errors, and reconciled them to destruction. You know their high original; you trace, with lively interest, their distant pedigree, and are proud to call yourselves by the name of their fathers: it is your boast and glory to observe the law of Moses, their legislator, and Christ who was born of them. And yet you disregard them, individually, if not as a people; and feel

no emotion when you see them perishing without those moral and religious advantages you possess in such rich abundance, and have never been forbidden to communicate. On the contrary, you know there would be joy in heaven itself to see the offspring of a Hebrew become a spiritual Christian. The only way in which an inhumanity, not natural to our hearts can be accounted for, is thoughtlessness of the circumstances in which we stand respecting these people, or ignorance of the means by which we can amend their condition.

These thoughts were suggested to me when, on a late occasion, I went to listen where the holders of the rich blessings of the gospel were assembled to consider the claims of these children; and deeply was my mind struck with the contrast of their condition and privileges with our own. They were not, indeed, unfed and naked in their land of barrenness, for pity had brought them in; but they were sitting there, the suppliants for a small share of that which once was all their own. The children of Abraham were in the dress of charity; their eyes cast down and often filled with tears, while their wants and claims were urged upon the gay crowd before them; gay in the ornaments of superfluous wealth: which, spared to them, had not been missed: and gay in the consciousness of moral dignity and enjoyment of spiritual good, that, divided with them, had surely not been lessened. Who are these children of Abraham? Abraham, four thousand years ago, worshipping God on the only altar he had upon the earth, the temple of Jerusalem in all its splendour; his own presence shining in the midst, while our unknown forefathers were wandering somewhere in the wilds of uncultured ignorance.

In determining to represent to Christians the

duty of instructing Jews in general, and Jewish children in particular, in the principles of the gospel of Christ, I have left the grounds on which more has been said than I can say. I have left to others the strength of Scripture language, and the mysterious voice of prophecy, and put in the plea of feeling, justice, and humanity.

NOTE. The closing remarks of this story, descriptive of the condition of the Jews in Europe, are not applicable to their circumstances in our highly favoured land of civil and religious privileges: yet the children of Abraham are to this day witnesses of the truth of prophecy. And they, who were once the chosen people of God, have, for eighteen hundred years, been scattered, persecuted and enslaved among almost every nation. And now nearly twelve millions of Jews are scattered over the earth, almost without a home, or a government which they can call their own.

It has been beautifully said by the poet—

“The wild Dove hath its nest,
The Fox his cave;
Mankind their country:
Israel but the grave.”

INCONSISTENCIES.

I HAD a short time since resolved that I would make an effort to describe, if possible, the beauty, and loveliness, and excellence of CONSISTENCY. But when I would have gone to work to paint the portrait, I found myself in no small difficulty—for where was the original? Had I any acquaintance with it? Had I ever seen it? Imagination may make a drawing, but a portrait it cannot make. And what would it avail me to describe an imaginary being, whose features none would recognise, when I profess to draw always from the life, and describe only what I hear and see? What was to be done? I could think of but one way of emerging from this great difficulty. If there were such a thing as CONSISTENCY, (and I had never heard it doubted) it must be somewhere to be found; why not look after it? I must, of course, have seen it often, and my ignorance of its exact features, and the contour of the countenance altogether, must be the result of inattention or forgetfulness. This might be repaired, as ignorance mostly may, by diligent research; and I resolved that it should be so. I resolved to listen every where, and look at every thing, and inquire of every body, till I should find my subject, and so have no more to do but to paint the resemblance of it. I put my pencil in my pocket—and my Indian-rubber lest I should sketch a feature wrong;

and patiently resolved to delay the portrait till I had seen the individual, whom I did not doubt to meet in some of the ordinary walks of society ; now that I had seriously set myself to watch for her. The progress of my researches is what I wish to disclose to my readers.

It happened, a short time after, that I was staying in a house where, without that sort of profusion that intimates abundant wealth, there was an air of ease and liberality, that spoke poverty equally distant. As many servants were kept as could do the required service well ; but not so many as usually prevent its being done at all. As much ornament was about the house, as gave a tone of elegance and comfort to the apartments ; but not so much that every thing must be bundled up in sacks of brown holland, till somebody is expected worthy to look upon it. The dress of the family was genteel, perhaps a little too particular ; but not so as to convey the idea that the great essential of their happiness, the cardinal virtue of their character, was to have their clothes becoming and well-made. In short, the whole air of the mansion seemed to say, " We have not enough to squander, but we have enough to enjoy "

It befel on an occasion, that we—that is, myself and the ladies of the family—sat pleasantly engaged in our morning occupations, about as important as such occupations usually are : that is, one was making a frill, and another was unpicking a frill that somebody else had made ; one was making match-boxes for the chimney, and another was making matches to put into the match-boxes, and so on. A person was announced who came to solicit a contribution to some charitable efforts making in the neighbourhood for the relief of indigence, or suffer-

ing of some kind, I do not exactly remember what. The lady of the house listened with much civility to the application ; fully approved of the object and the proposed means ; wished all manner of success ; and greatly lamented that her very limited income did not allow of her doing so much good as she desired. They had contributed already to so many things ; the objects of private charity that presented themselves were so numerous, it was quite impossible to assist in any new efforts. The applicant, who, as an intimate friend of the family, used the liberty of persuasion, again pointed out the necessity of the case, and the Christian duty of dispensing what we hold of providential bounty. The lady replied extremely well ; spoke fairly of the beauty and the duty of charity ; admitted that she did not give so much as she should feel to be right, and as she should be inclined to, but that she actually had no more to spare : her income was only sufficient for the proprieties of her condition : she never expended any thing unnecessarily ; she wished she had a few hundreds a-year more, and she would give a guinea to this undertaking most willingly ; there was nothing for which she so much desired wealth. Then turning to her daughters, she said, " I do not know how the girls' allowance stands—they are always anxious to give, and I am sure this is a case in which they would feel deeply interested : but they, like myself, cannot do all they wish."

" I really am sorry," said the elder daughter, " but I have given away every farthing I can possibly spare. If I had a shilling left, that I could do without, I should think it my duty to give it on such an occasion."

" I have no money," said one of the younger girls, " but I am thinking whether I can assist the charity

in any other way ; whether I can take any part in the trouble of providing—of visiting the”——

“ I am sure, Julia, you cannot,” interrupted her sister, “ you know you have more to do already than you can get through. Our time is taken up with so many things—it is impossible you can undertake any thing more.”

“ Well, I believe it is,” answered Julia ; “ but this is so plainly a case of urgent necessity ; a duty so obvious, that we certainly ought to aid it in some way.”

“ We ought, if we could, my dear,” said her mother ; “ but no one is required to do more than she can. As it has not pleased Providence to give us any superfluity of wealth, much is not required of us. It cannot be our duty to give more than we can spare with propriety, and in justice to ourselves and our families. I am really sorry, because I think it a proper case.”

The contribution was declined, and the visiter departed. I held my tongue ; but I had been thinking all the time. I thought it was a pity people so charitably disposed had so limited an income. I thought how painful it must be to them to feel that there was no way in which they could make their circumstances yield to the claims of their suffering fellow-creatures, without trespassing on the expenditure imperiously demanded of them by the proprieties of life. And as my secret reflections are apt to stray very widely from the point where they begin, and no one spoke to interrupt me, I went on to think what is the real extent of charity that Christian principle may demand of any one. It is immediately perceptible that it cannot be to do away with the distinctions Providence has made, and throw from us the advantages and indulgences Providence has

4c. given, and disenable ourselves to support the expenditure acquired by our station, itself a means of dispersing wealth, and averting property from the industrious.

A limit, therefore, there must be to every one's liberality. But can that limit be within the point where a case of real want presents itself, and the possessor of wealth *can* command, without injustice or injury to any one, something to bestow? I was just entering in thought upon this wide field of rumination, when the servant announced the arrival of a vender of certain rare articles of dress, and curious wares from abroad: things as pleasant to the eye of taste, as to that of vanity. The vender was willingly admitted. Every thing was examined, many things were wished for, a few things were purchased. The mother bought some ornaments for the table; the eldest girl bought some ivory winders for her thread, much prettier than the wooden ones she had in use before. Julia bought a gilded buckle to fasten her waistband. These things were all very pretty; not very extravagant in price; harmless indulgences of taste. The produce of some one's industry; the superfluity the Creator has provided means for, and therefore, may not disapprove. But they were all unnecessary.

The one lady had added nothing to her influence or respectability by the ornaments for her table; the second lady had added nothing to her comfort or happiness by exchanging wooden winders for ivory ones; the third lady had added nothing to her grace or beauty by a new buckle for her waistband. "Therefore," I said within myself, "their words and their actions do not agree. They said there was nothing for which they so much valued wealth, as to distribute it to the necessitous. That was not true;

they preferred to spend it on themselves. They said they had not any money to spare, though they felt strongly the claim that was made on them. That was not true—they could spare money the first time they felt inclined. (Had these people said they had given in charity as large a portion of their income as they thought it their duty to deprive themselves of, and wished to give no more, it had been well; and whether right or wrong, they had spoken honestly: but inasmuch as they said they wished to give, and regretted that they could not, their words and their deeds were not consistent.”

“Good morning, dear,” said Mrs. White to her cousin Mrs. Grey, as I chanced to hear in one of my morning walks: “I have a favour to ask of you. Our girls are going to have a quadrille party next week, and I wish you would let your young people come.”

“You know I do not like my girls to enter into those things”——

“Not when it takes them into public, and leads to habitual dissipation; but in private parties, and when you know what company they mix with; and when you are sure they will neither hear nor see any thing calculated to pervert their principles, or corrupt their minds; it is impossible you can imagine any harm in a party, merely because they dance. We shall not have above thirty people.”

“No, certainly not because they dance. To dance, literally, is only to move in a certain measured step, and jump a certain number of inches from the ground, and go about the room in a prescribed figure, instead of the irregular figure and unmeasured pace they would observe were they running upon the hills. I am not so absurd as to suppose there can be any harm in this motion more than in

any other motion. Therefore that my girls do not come, is not merely because you have dancing, but I do not like that kind of a party for them at any rate. It is a scene of display—an exhibition of the person and excitement of the mind, that they are better and happier without, and I should be sorry they acquired a taste for it."

"I cannot think why you should fear their having a taste for an innocent amusement, that all young people enjoy; you are not bringing them up for the cloister, I suppose?"

"By no means; I bring them up to be agreeable and useful in society, and therefore would not wish to unfit them for it: but you cannot pretend to say there is any real enjoyment in society; any mental improvement to be expected, or benevolent feeling to be cultivated, in these parties?"

"Perhaps not—I cannot say there is: but at least there is no harm."

"That is not so certain: I apprehend a great deal of harm may be done. A great many wrong feelings are excited. If they are much noticed, and have the best partners, vanity and self-esteem are excited; if they see others succeeding better, jealousy is excited: jealousy, and vanity, and self-esteem, are sins, and in all sin there is harm. Then there is so much thought and care about what they are to wear, and how they shall look, and what will be thought of them by strangers: a set of people, in whose approbation or affections they can never find credit or advantage, whom they care nothing about, and to whom, therefore, I would not have them feel anxious to commend themselves by such factitious means. They are contented now with pleasing those who know and love them, and in whose society they find advantage. I would rather they did not come

to you to acquire new desires, and divert their minds from more rational pursuits."

"I would not persuade you against your wishes: I know your sort of religion forbids you to conform to what you call the practices of the world; but I do not perfectly understand to which of its practices you do, and to which you do not, object."

The ladies parted. Mrs. Grey and myself walked home to find the young ladies, to whom their mother mentioned what had passed. They gave entire assent to her opinions; spoke with more vehemence and less moderation against the vanity and wickedness of such amusements; pitied their cousins' corrupt propensities, and detailed half-a-dozen instances of the spirit of emulation, and contention, and display, exercised in parties of the kind: and then they talked about renouncing the world, and its pompe, and its delusions: and the spirit of self renunciation, meekness, and humility, that could only be maintained away from scenes of dissipation, rivalry, and display; and so on and so on. And I thought they talked uncommonly well, only rather too fast; particularly as nobody was disposed to contradict them.

I observed, however, that they were remarkably busy all the time, as if in the act of preparing for something.

"Mamma," said Charlotte, "have you brought the flowers for our bonnets?"

"No, my dear, but we will send for them."

"Well, but we must make haste; the meeting begins in an hour or two, and we shall not be ready—ring the bell." The bell was not answered. "Ring again." The bell broke—that was the bell-hanger's fault. "Where is John?"—"John is gone out, ma'am."—"How tiresome! then Betty

must go."—"Betty is about Miss Charlotte's pelisse that must be done to put on this morning."—"Was ever any thing so provoking? Then, cook, you must go."—"I am just putting down the meat, Miss, and can't leave it."

"My dear," said Mrs. Grey, "you can wear your bonnets as they are."

"No, mamma, that is impossible: we had better not go at all."

"Then you must go for them yourselves."

"Yes, and how are we to be ready? Every body will be there before us. Things always happen so contrarily!"

And now a certain quantity of ill-humour, and a considerable quantity of impatience, were manifested on all sides. Mamma blamed the girls, first for thinking about their dress at all, and then for not having thought of it sooner. The girls wondered their mamma had not brought in the flowers; John was blamed for not being at home when he had been sent out; Betty was blamed for being busy when she had been set to work; the cook was blamed for dressing the meat, though no one, as I believe, meant to go without their dinner. The ladies were what, in domestic phraseology, is called *put out*; and when that takes place in a family, it does not signify who is to blame, or what the matter is—every body must submit to be in the wrong.

Time mends all things. The young ladies went to the anniversary of some charitable society in the town; and the young ladies came home again.

"Well, my dears," said Mrs. Grey, "how have you been pleased?"

"Tolerably," replied Ann; "but we were so late, and got such bad seats—I could not enjoy it at all. Do you know that there were those Miss Browns

in High Street, sitting before us in the best seats; and they would not make room for us, though they knew very well who we were. A great many people put themselves forward who have not done half so much for the charity as we have."—"Dear, yes," said Charlotte, "and I had such a vulgar woman next me; she would speak to me, and I was quite afraid lest people should think I knew her."—"And, mamma, the three Miss Blakes were there. Their servants were in such gay liveries, it made me feel ashamed of John's old clothes. Julia Blake was very rude to me; but I took care to be quite as rude to her; for I think myself of as much consequence as she is."—"Lady B—— was there. I wish we could have gotten up to speak to her; people must have thought we belonged to nobody."

"Those who knew you had no occasion to think, my dear; and those who did not, are not of much consequence to you. But you have not told me what you heard."

"O, we heard a great deal of good: I wonder my cousin Whites were not there. It would be much better for them than going to balls. It was a very interesting meeting; but there were not so many people of consequence there as last year; these things always go off. There were some excellent speeches: it vexed me to hear that disagreeable man who was so rude to us once at the committee, so very much applauded. I quite hate that man; but he made by far the most sensible and religious speech."

To that connexion of ideas, which, on the repetition of a single word, brings back to memory all with which it has sometime been associated, it was doubtless, owing, that I, at this moment, thought of pomps, and delusions, and conformities; and self-subjection,

and meekness, and humility ; and love of approbation, and fear of opinion, and rivalry, and contention ; and a great many other things that had not much to do with the dinner we were eating, or the meeting we were talking of. Had Mrs. White been there, a part of her doubts had been solved at least ; for though she had not learned what it was of the world the Miss Grey's religion taught them to renounce, she had certainly discovered what it was not. Is it the practice of the world, or its spirit, that stands most opposed to religion ? Avails it any thing to renounce the one and keep the other. I saw no **CONSISTENCY** between the morning's discourse and the evening's, except in volubility of speech.

I was visiting lately a friend in the country ; a rational, good sort of woman ; the queen, by long established courtesy, of a populous village, where nobody thought themselves of more consequence than herself. She had been a very happy woman all her life, and might have continued so to the end of it, had she not been disturbed by the conduct of her neighbours, and certain disorders that had broken out in the village. All Lady Ball's sorrows grew out of her warm attachment to the church of England, and very susceptible aversion to every thing that looked like a departure from its rules, or a dissent from its opinions. Some of her neighbours, and even the curate of the parish himself, were beginning to disturb her peace by manifesting most dangerous symptoms of dissent.

Partly from participation in her love of the church, and partly from the tenderness I always have for the honest zeal that takes fright even at the bugbears of its own imagination, when they seem to endanger the thing it loves ; I should have felt a great deal for Lady Ball's sorrows, had I not ob-

served there were times and circumstances in which her respect for the church, and its decisions, and its wisdom, was considerably abated. The established religion has appointed the celebration of the Sabbath, and enjoins on its members to attend those appointments strictly. It orders all secular affairs to be suspended: the sale of the necessaries of life to be forborne; the unnecessary labour of man and beast dispensed with; the amusements of the idle, as well as the toils of the industrious, to be superseded by public manifestations of religious reverence, and private exercise of devotion. Lady Ball was of another mind: she could make a better use of this day than that to which the church has assigned it. It was the best day of the seven for travelling, because there were fewer things on the road, and there was not much else to be done; except, indeed, the occupations to which the church devoted it, and they were of no consequence.

She would go to the morning service, and so might her children, if there was nothing to prevent: that is, if there had not fallen a shower in the night to make it damp; or there was not a cloud in the heavens that might produce a shower by and by; or she had not slept too late to be ready within ten minutes after the bells had done ringing. Two services are ordered; but she held the second altogether superfluous: the carriage, and of course the horses, and of course the servants, were always required at three o'clock for her customary ride. She liked orthodox religion in inferior people, provided always, it did not interfere with the orthodox irreligion: that is to say, the convenience of their superiors. She did not disapprove of her servants going to church; but it was seldom convenient to spare them. Articles were purchased from her trades-

people on Sunday : the law is otherwise, but it was convenient. Persons were employed to fetch things, and carry things, and do things, on the Sabbath, in direct opposition to the law, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*; but to do these things too, was convenient.

The church has issued a Catechism for the instruction and guidance of the young, and Lady Ball's children were most carefully taught it, and made to repeat it; but they were not taught, nor indeed allowed to follow or believe it. Their mother would have thought them very superstitious had they feared the influence of an evil spirit, and very methodistical had they expected the influence of a good spirit, she would have been much vexed had they grown up with a contempt for the vanities of life, to which she reared them, or a distaste for the pomps and splendours she taught them to aspire to. In respect to the keeping of all God's commandments, that might be very well, according to her own interpretation of them, but not precisely according to that given in the Catechism. For they were by precept and example taught to consider their own advantage first, their neighbour's benefit second, and God's requirements last. They were to obey lawful authorities, when it was dangerous or disreputable to do otherwise; but they might circumvent the law, to evade it, when it interfered with their private interests. They might not tell a lie, so called; but they were taught to tell as many indirect ones, by false representations, false excuses, and false politeness, as might suit their purpose. In respect to slander, evil-speaking, unkind and malevolent feelings, if they were ever checked in these, it was only because children should not be encouraged in them : daily proof was before their eyes, that when they

ceased to be children, there would be no harm in these things.

The church has appointed certain times for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and earnestly exhorts her members to be present there and duly to receive it. Here Lady Ball dissents again: she can only attend once or twice a year, or when she happens to have a leisure week—that is, a week free from common engagements, to prepare herself for the ceremony. In opinions it were endless to trace out the difference. The church teaches her perpetually to repent in public, that she is a ruined and corrupted creature, needing the interference of divine grace to reconcile her to God, and make her meet for eternity: but she insists in private, that she is a good sort of a person, and that her acquaintance are very good, and nobody is in need of conversion but papists and pagans, and nobody in need of repentance but drunkards and pickpockets. In short, I could not be long with Lady Ball, without perceiving that she dissents from her own church in opinion, in practice, in every thing: and therefore, is not consistent in her fears for it.

“Mamma,” said little Julia to her mother, “what is the reason you would not let us play at cards last night, when we wanted to amuse our little party? You let the boys play at marbles; I should like to understand the difference?”

“The difference,” replied my friend, “you may not perceive—yet there is a difference, and perhaps I can make you understand it. Shooting of marbles is a play of our childhood, and may not be wrong if not played to win. It is rather a game of skill, than of chance. I should, however, object to playing at marbles, or any thing else to win or for money, lest it should induce a love of gambling that would soon

transfer itself to other venturers. Cards are generally played for money: but even when nothing is to be gained or lost by the game, it is a waste of precious time for no valuable purpose; and a taste may be formed, which may in the end, lead to an inclination for gambling.

"But, mamma," said the little girl, "I did not think there was any harm in winning or losing?"

"If you win, what you gain is not honestly yours. You neither earn it, nor deserve it, nor receive it as a voluntary gift: it is not therefore a lawful possession. This may appear a small matter while the sum is small, but there is no limit to a moral maxim of this sort: a little and a little added, and the sum becomes a large one. The yet greater evil is the feeling excited while at play: the eagerness, the anxiety, the temper, the impatience, and the ultimate vexation. It is impossible to see a party of children playing at any game to win, and not perceive these effects, even more obviously than among elder people, because they have less control over their emotions to suppress or conceal them. All these unnatural stimulants to passions, these morbid stirrings of the spirits, are destructive to the simple, calm, and innocent delights of childhood, and creative of a desire for excitement which the duties and ordinary enjoyments of after life are scarcely likely to supply. I consider that the feeling of pleasure which attends winning, or pain in losing, would be equally injurious to the mind it acted on; if there were no desire to win, there would be no pleasure in playing—which must be gratified at the cost of your antagonist. A most dangerous taste to cultivate, is the desire of succeeding at another's cost, and that without any superior merit or exertion of our own."

Here the conversation ended. I thought the mo-

ther's remarks very sensible and just; and indisputably applicable to the years of childhood, whatever they might be later; but a surprise awaited me. I had been invited by my friend to accompany her the following day to the school at which her elder daughters were educating, to be present at the distribution of prizes. As some of my readers have inferred from my former remarks on the subject, that I disapprove of prizes altogether, I may take this opportunity of assuring them I do not. Reward is the natural fruit of merit, and I would have it ever be its attendant. In a school or elsewhere, I would have each one rewarded according to their merit. But it should be their abstract, not their comparative success: a prize for reaching some given point, not for outstripping, without effort a less competent, but as willing a competitor. This by the way—for what I went to see, is by no means to the point.

When we had passed the stone wall and iron gate by which the corruptions of the world are supposed to be excluded from minds not sufficiently matured to resist them, we were shown into the hall of this mansion of education, already crowded with the young candidates for honour or reward: as yet I knew not which. They wore their gayest dress, and the apartment was decked as for festivity; but it did not strike me that the countenances, as I examined them successively, wore exactly a festive aspect. There was an expression of painful anxiety in most, and in those that had an air of confident gayety, it did not seem to sit altogether easy. There was not one among them I could have selected as the picture of conscious merit waiting its reward. I began to apprehend that by some strange mischance, not one among them thought she could make good her claim. The ceremony began, and the names of

many were called in succession. As each young lady heard her own, a vivid expression of pleasure passed over her features, but they soon resumed the previous expression of anxiety; while those who did not hear their names, changed their air of doubt to one of sullen despondency.

I begged to know the meaning of this proceeding, and was informed that those whose names were not called, had, on previous examination, been found undeserving to be admitted as competitors for reward. Nothing could be more just than that those who had merited no recompense should expect none, and receive none: though I did not perceive why they should have been kept to this time in ignorance of their exclusion; the painfulness of uncertainty and suspense not being considered particularly good for the susceptible spirits of childhood. The deserving competitors were now numbered, and an equal number of ornamented cards were put into a most portentous bag of bright blue satin. Now, again, I was a little puzzled; there were fifteen ladies of this non-excluded class; they were of different ages, and most likely of very different attainments; but to all appearance they must be of exactly equal merit, for the same bag received all the cards, and the cards that went into the bag were all alike.

As my old trick of listening could avail me nothing, where the most profound and suspensive silence prevailed, I was obliged to betake myself to guessing how this could be. My best conjecture was, that to avoid all rivalry, every deserving pupil was to have a prize proportioned to her individual merit; and that, though my eye could not perceive it, there must be written on each card the name of a lady, and the prize adjudged to her. It is true I did not exactly see how these decrees of justice were to

find their way out of the blue satin bag into the fingers of the rightful possessor ; unless some of the conjuring tribe were hidden at the bottom of it, while each in succession thrust in her little hand. What was my surprise when, out of fifteen ladies who had been pronounced deserving of reward for their improvement in music, the occasion of this first lottery, one only gained the prize : not by merit, or talent, or industry, superior to her competitors, but by the accident of putting her fingers on the right card ; while all the rest, though judged deserving of reward, were to suffer the disappointment of excited expectation, and see another enjoy the recompense to which their own claim had been admitted equal, and perhaps was known to be superior ! I need not describe the repeated ceremony. One after another the lotteries went on, for each different branch of education.

I turned to my friend when the ceremony was concluded, and asked her how she could suffer the minds of her children to be thus acted upon ; their feelings thus senselessly excited ; the very spirit and essence of gaming thus instilled ? She said it was the custom of the school ; and she had never thought of any harm there could be in it. I reminded her of the conversation of the preceding evening with her little Julia, and remarked on the inconsistency of her keen perception of danger in the one case, with her blind insensibility to it in the other. For my own part, this system seemed to me such an outrage upon common sense, that on any evidence but fact, I could not have believed any rational governess could invent, or any careful parent suffer such a practice. When all was over, I made especial inquiry into the results : and I found one girl, whom I knew to be by no means the best, laden with prizes,

exultingly setting off to her home to exhibit proofs of an advancement she had not made, and display her triumph over companions she had by no means equalled. I saw another, an industrious, clever girl, going off, with tearful eyes and saddened spirits, without a single testimony of good conduct or recompense of exertion; though she had been worthy of drawing for every prize, and of all the school had best deserved to do so.

We condemn the wisdom of our ancestors, who, when they could not decide the merits of a cause, referred it to the decision of Heaven by some superstitious ordeal. Do the ladies who superintend these schools really believe that fortune will respect the merits of their pupils, and do they so intend to teach them? Or—more probable result, and yet more dangerous lesson for their after life—do they mean to teach them that success goes by chance, and not by merit; that it is *better to be lucky than wise*; that to win a prize, is easier than to earn it? We doubt not that many of our readers who are not in these secrets, will think the practice so strange a one, that we need not to have spoken so much about it. I should have thought so too, did I not know that it is practised by some teachers, and suffered by many parents, who, I believe, act under the influence of the best moral feeling, and the purest religious principle, in the management of the children committed to their care; and would by no means suffer them to receive such impressions under any other form.

MORE INCONSISTENCIES.

WHEN almost discouraged with my ill success in seeking after Consistency, I chanced to meet with a friend who was engaged in the same pursuit, and whose story I will endeavour to give nearly as I received it, which is as follows :

Not long since I spent some time with a family who were ever speaking of Consistency, and that too, after the manner of a most familiar acquaintance. The word being perpetually on their lips, I could not doubt but they were well acquainted with the thing, and perhaps could afford the very information I had sought for so far in vain. Nothing could be more promising than the first aspect of things. With the first breath I drew in their abode, I seemed to inhale a love of this unknown ; and so contagious is example, that before many days had elapsed, I found it impossible to express myself on any subject without using the word. It is a delightful word, and it will do for any thing. With the help of a small negation it will stand for sin, or folly, or falsehood, or treachery, or caprice, or infidelity, or any thing within the whole compass of moral defectability.

Whenever a fool committed folly, we said he was not consistent : when the false-hearted did one thing and professed another, we said they were not consistent : when the selfish betrayed their friends to serve themselves, we said they were not consistent : in short, whenever a sinner, under any form, com-

mitted sin, we said he was not consistent. I was delighted, for in all the languages I had learned, I never found a word so universally applicable. But most of all was it valuable to designate those nameless discrepancies in our friends, which all are quick to perceive, but no one can readily describe. We were no slanderers, and would not for worlds have said that those who did not please us were false, or ignorant, or disagreeable, or any thing that perhaps they might not be: but we could always say they were inconsistent, without danger of contradiction: and we did say so of every one who had the misfortune to come within our observation. In one respect, at least, we obeyed the spirit of the Christian precept; for we treated our enemies in this matter full as well as our friends. Among the abundant examples and countless uses of this term, I know not where to select for the information of the reader: any instance I may give, can be but one of thousands.

We were just rid of some evening visitors with whom we had spent several hours in the rapid interchange of most polite discourse. They had said every thing that language can express, in praise of all that was in the house, or about the house, or within sight of any of the windows: and the ladies, my companions, had given back to the full the measure they had meted. If they said our drawings or fancy works were beautiful, we said they were nothing in comparison with theirs: if they praised our music, we were surprised that they, who were used to so much better, should be so very kind as to listen to it. We said their children were the largest, and their dogs the smallest, and their jewels the brightest, and their words the wisest, in the known world: for any thing I knew it might be so, for they

were strangers to me. As soon as they were gone, Miss Sarah said with a sigh—"What dreadful flatterers those people are; and they swallow it as willingly as they bestow it! There is no way of pleasing them, but by the grossest compliments. They are very false: I know exactly what they mean when they admire any thing; they only want you to say that something of theirs is better. I make a point of saying so directly, because I know they will be disappointed if I do not."

"Are they very superior people?" I asked.

"O, by no means: they understand nothing; they praise every thing and every body alike; they think flattery must please others because it pleases them, and they bestow it as liberally as they desire it."

"There is, at least, good-nature in the intention."

"If they were more consistent in their good-nature; but they will not continue to praise us in our absence."

"If they do," thought I, "we shall have better than requital at their hands:" but we were quite agreed that it was inconsistent to flatter people in their presence, and speak ill of them the moment they were gone.

"I wish," said Matilda, one morning, with reference to a lady who had just made her first visit at the house,— "I wish Miss N.'s conduct were more consistent. If I knew nothing of her, I should have been greatly taken with her manner and conversation this morning: I should really have considered her very sensible and serious"——

"And how do you know she is not?" I asked, interrupting her.

"One can only judge the tree by its fruits, and her conduct is so very inconsistent."

"In what way do you mean?"

"I really do not exactly know ; I have very little acquaintance with her ; I have avoided it, because I think such people dangerous : but I have heard many things of her not at all consistent with a religious character. It is very easy to talk and profess, but when one knows she does not mean what she says, there is danger in having the form of godliness without the power."

I admitted the justness of this remark, but still desired to know wherein Miss N. stood more exposed than others to this danger ; for I had been much pleased with her conversation in the short visit she made us. Urged again, Matilda said Miss N. wore feathers, which she thought not consistent with the sobriety of dress that becomes a Christian ; then she had heard she went into gay company : she did not know whether it was true, but she supposed it was : she often saw her speaking to people of that sort, and the Scriptures had required us not to be conformed to the fashions of the world. I thought the Scriptures had also commanded us not to speak evil one of another, nor to judge one another ; but I did not make the remark.

"I have heard," continued Matilda—"I do not remember where I heard it—but I know I heard it from somebody—that she is not particularly strict in the observance of the Sabbath ; it is impossible a person can be a child of God, and break his positive commandments."

I thought it was one of the positive commandments that we should not bear false witness against our neighbours. But I made no remark, at this time not quite agreeing with my friend ; for, if Matilda did not know what she said to be false, she did not know it to be true ; and, if it was true, she had only assumed what she began with asserting, that Miss

N. professed what she did not mean. How did Matilda know what Miss N. professed? In our recent conversation, confessedly the first she ever had with her, I am certain she had not professed not to wear feathers, or not to go into company; and supposing Matilda did not profess to speak no evil, and bear no false-witness, I considered that however wrong I might regard them, both or either, I could not well apply to them my favourite word, and it was a great disappointment to me.

Seated at tea in the balcony of our house, we were conversing one evening on a melancholy occurrence in a family of the neighbourhood, in which a young person had been reduced to a state of deep and morbid melancholy, by the effects of long-protracted anxiety, ending in severe and remediless affliction. It came to be considered, in the course of conversation, how far such a result was consistent with religious submission to the will of Heaven. It was very clearly proved, that by a mind entirely detached from the things of earth, the loss of earthly things could not consistently be felt; that a mind entirely trusting in the wisdom and power of God, could not consistently suffer from anxiety; that a mind totally acquiescent in the will of God, could not consistently feel regret at the dispensations of Providence: and above all, that where no loss, or anxiety, or regret, could be felt, the mind could not consistently be deranged by them. These were truths beyond all controversy, and we were thence successfully going on to deduce the inconsistency of this helpless sufferer in particular, and of every body else in general, ourselves excepted, when the rolling of distant thunder in the horizon announced a coming storm, called off our attention, and turned the conversation. The storm arose. The young la-

dies became desperately frightened; they did not know for what, but lest some harm should happen to themselves, or somebody, or something that belonged to them. When I endeavoured to soothe them by assurance that no ill would happen, they grew angry. How could I be sure of that? Lightning often kills people—wind often blows houses down—people sometimes lose their eyes or their hearing in a thunder-storm: in short, they thought it quite wicked not to be frightened when there was danger, and distressed when there might be suffering, to others, if not to ourselves.

The storm subsided—but not so the fears. They had now, indeed, a definite object; very considerable damage was supposed to have been done on a distant part of the coast, where they had property, and they might possibly be very material losers by the accident. Gloom, fretfulness, and anxiety, pervaded the house through all that night and the succeeding day. With the hopefulness generally experienced by the uninterested spectator of others' anxieties, I represented to them every probability or possibility, reasonable or unreasonable, that their property might not have been injured; but they persisted in expecting the worst, and in rejecting all palliations of the possible mischief. They would not eat, they would not sleep, they would not divert their minds by employment, or relieve themselves by conversation; and when they thought they perceived in me an opinion that they showed more uneasiness than was warranted by a yet uncertain ill, and more impatience under an imagined loss, than might have been reasonable even under a known one, they observed, that to be less anxious than they were, would be unnatural, insensible, impossible; in short, inconsistent with common sense. It did not

happen to us at that time to renew the conversation of the balcony; of minds detached from earth; of trust that could not be shaken; of acquiescence that could not be moved; of that self-possession, in short, that could not be disturbed in a devoted and well-regulated mind.

Among our intimate acquaintance, there was one young person whose liveliness of manner and buoyancy of spirits made her the life of her family and the zest of every company she happened to mix with. She went gaily and cheerfully about every task that circumstance or choice imposed; she spoke of every thing with playful vivacity, and did every thing with an air of confident expectation. Meet her when you would, or where you would, there was always a brightness in her eye, and a smile on her brow, and activity and enjoyment in her whole demeanour. We allowed that this was agreeable, we confessed great pleasure in her society, but we could not approve her character; it was not consistent for a Christian to be always so light-hearted. The pilgrim, the penitent, the culprit, the suppliant dependent on Almighty pity; the combatant, struggling through unequal warfare, the prodigal, as yet almost a stranger in his home; the meek, the mournful, and the broken-hearted, emblems by which the Deity has described his people, are characters, we said, that consist not with so much gayety and lightness of spirits, such sanguine, cheerful, fearless animation.

There was another, on whose brow the shade of pensiveness forever sat supreme: she seemed to be always feeling, one might have said, always suffering. If there ever came a smile on her features, it was gone, ere you could be sure you saw it there.

If there ever escaped from her a word of jest, the sigh came so quickly after, you felt forbidden to remark it: the liquid eye, and changeful colour, spoke intensity of feeling; but even in her feeling, there was a stillness—in her very pleasures, if she knew any, there was a tone of melancholy. Her affectionate softness we felt was lovely, her gentle sadness interesting; we could even have loved her, had we not seen her so very inconsistent. A Christian who professes, as we supposed she did, to have found a real and substantial bliss in grateful anticipation of eternal joy, ought never to be melancholy: habitual sadness, an air of habitual suffering, was not consistent with the security, and peace, and joy, offered in the gospel to the believer, and professedly accepted by him.

There was a third person, whose busy, bustling, babbling nature, happily set in motion by a disposition to good, was for ever talking, and for ever doing. From sunrise to sunset, she was to be seen in motion; assisting every body, exhorting every body, teaching every body: sometimes laden with books to give away, sometimes with work to be done, or clothes to be bestowed. Her tables were strewn with tracts and baby-linen; her basket was filled with preserves and cough-mixtures. Nobody could live without her assistance, nobody could die without her administration. It almost seemed that nobody could go to heaven without her guidance. The days were too short for what she had to do; the hours were not long enough for what she had to say: her busy head was always devising something; her bustling step was always pursuing something; her rapid finger was always making something; her tongue outstripped them all; and of all,

good was the object, and benevolence the motive. Her name was written in every record of humanity, and sounded on every tongue, and engraven, doubtless, in many a grateful heart; but we did not like her, because she was not, as we said, altogether *consistent*. While engaged so much abroad, domestic piety was overlooked; while hurried up and down in perpetual activity of benevolence, private devotion must be neglected; there could be no time for reading or reflection; the religion of the closet was of more avail than all this bustle, and more consistent with the genuine spirit of the gospel.

A fourth friend we had of an opposite character. She was never to be found taking part in the institutions of benevolence, or joining in public exertions for the propagation of truth. She was not known as the instructor of the ignorant, or the comforter of the afflicted; she was not known to belong to institutions or societies; she was very seldom heard to speak upon religion, and was very seldom seen in religious society. In private only might her piety be detected; in the peace and holiness that reigned in her family; the devotion that seemed to have its favourite dwelling in her closet; the silent study of the truth; the firm abiding by its precepts, the regulation of her temper by its laws; the tone, in short, of her whole feelings, habits, and desires, perceived, though untold, betrayed rather than exhibited. It was necessary to know her intimately to perceive all this: we knew it, but it did not please us. If she was pious in heart, and devoted in private, why did she not come forward? Why did she not join with others of like feelings, and do as they do? It was not consistent that one who really loved the truth, should be supinely indifferent about its

propagation: one who really feels, must talk and act, must be anxious to impart what she knows, and disclose what she enjoys: a barren and unproductive faith, so difficult to discover, and so fruitless, could not be consistent with Christianity.

There was a fifth, whom birth and circumstances had accustomed to all the elegancies and luxuries of life. A refined mind, a cultivated taste, and delicate habits, all conspired to make these things valuable and needful to her; and it was evident they were valued and enjoyed. She was nice in her dress, expensive in her establishment, stylish in the arrangements of her household. Here we condemned at once; so much indulgence and display, and care for things exterior, was not consistent with humility, self denial, and renunciation of the world.

A sixth, who in a station of equal elevation, and with equal means, was neglectful of appearances, homely in her habits, indifferent to the distinctions of society, whether from inclination, or from conscientious self-abasement, received from us no kinder judgment. It was not consistent in people of rank to look like housemaids, to live like peasants, to contravene the arrangements of providence, by leveling the distinctions of rank and circumstance.

These, and such as these, are but instances of our ample success, in finding all our neighbours guilty of inconsistency. After all our talk about Consistency, and the want of Consistency, and the beauty of Consistency, where was the idea the word had stood for? Within me, and around me, I began to search for it. In my own mind, I could find nothing like an idea upon the subject. I had applied the word so indiscriminately to such a heterogeneous

multitude of things, from the careless dropping of an unweighed word, to the crime of grossest malignity, it was impossible for any one definition, or any one idea, to comprehend the whole. Around me—alas! in reiterating the charge of inconsistency on others, had we not amply proved it in ourselves?

CONSISTENCY.

My readers may, I fear, become weary of a subject that has loitered unsuccessfully through three or four chapters, with no better result than that of proving, what might scarcely need a proof, that a great many people talk of what they do not understand, or reproach others with the wrong themselves unwittingly commit. Lest this should be, I propose, like other narrators, to tack a moral to my tale, by way of conclusion, and so abandon it. My object was not, as may have seemed, to prove every body in the wrong; but rather to exhibit the various modes of inconsistency: that, perceiving it, and applying it, each one may correct his own. Some have said, why expose the faults and inconsistencies of those whose principles are good, and bring on religion the reproach of all the inconsistencies of those who profess it? Let the shame be to the creature, and the glory to the Creator: what is good in us, is His; what is evil, is our own. But if it be true that these things exist, and that they are inconsistencies, shall we say—shall we leave it to others to say for us—that what in the careless and the earthly-minded we should condemn as faults, in those who profess more seriousness and devotion we can gloss over and disown?

It was said of one of old, that it was easier to believe that drunkenness was not a vice, than that he should be considered guilty of a crime, who indulged

in drunkenness. Far be from Christianity the adoption of so heathen a principle! Rather say the spot is the blacker for the brightness of the surface on which it is seen; the stain the darker for the purity of the garment it pollutes: it seems so, and it is so. If we are ashamed of it, as well indeed we may, let us efface it, clean it, wipe it out: but not deny that it is there, or deny that it is what it seems to be. Christians think not themselves, they think not each other, sinless creatures. Should they desire to pass their alloy upon the world for pure and proven gold? But they say it is for the honour of religion, not their own, that they are so tenacious of the exposure of their faults. We are glad if it is so; but we would rather have this pious tenaciousness exercised in correcting the evils, than in glossing them over; in lamenting, than in denying them.

We hear of the beauty of Consistency; we repeat perpetually, because we hear it, that nothing is so beautiful as a consistent character; but what does it mean? The sinner's consistency, alas! is sin; the false heart's consistency is falsehood; the villain's consistency is villany; but is this beautiful? It is a very common argument in the world, or rather a phrase that supplies the place of one, that it does not signify what religion a man professes, or what faith he holds, provided his conduct be consistent. Consistent with what? His errors? His perversions? That, alas! it is but too sure to be. The man who believes there is no God, is consistent when he breaks his laws, and sets his asserted power at defiance. The man who believes that there is no eternity, is consistent when he devotes himself to the things of time and sense; and is but the more consistent as he becomes more sensual. He, whose perverted judgment and corrupted taste, prefers the

pleasure of sin to the peace of holiness, the interests of time to the bliss of eternity, is consistent when he takes the one and leaves the other : is consistent when he commits sin ; is consistent when he defends it. The basest character on earth may be a consistent one. There cannot, therefore, be a more dangerous maxim ; and I name it the rather, as my young friends will hear it frequently repeated by the wise and prudent of the world.

A consistent character must certainly be that, which, having chosen the object of existence, employs the powers of existence to the attainment of that object : and in each particular, having formed a purpose, to do and to be what will promote that purpose. The inconsistency of the greater number of persons arises from their having conscience enough, and moral sense enough, to perceive what their objects ought to be, and to determine their choice for good ; while they have neither sense enough, nor virtue enough, to pursue it : and so the means and the end are for ever at variance, and the strangest inconsistencies are the result.

The world in general (I mean the decent and moral part of it, for the outlawed rioter in mischief we must leave to the full credit of his consistency) confess an end and object of existence which they do not pursue. We thus act exactly like a traveller, who, wishing to go to Greenwich, should, on looking at the way-post that directs him thither, turn off to the other hand, and proceed to London ; of such a traveller we should say that either he could not read, or, that he wanted understanding, or that he did not really desire to go to the place he professed to set out for. And so we may say in effect of all the inconsistencies of life and conduct : they arise in ignorance, misjudgment, or dishonesty.

I will illustrate my meaning by a few examples—not of the most important, perhaps, for it is not in great matters that we make the most mistakes—it is the familiar occurrences of daily life that make up the character and conduct of persons in ordinary life. When symptoms of physical disorder are to be cured, the cause of those symptoms must be discovered and removed: so, when discrepancies of conduct and inconsistency of character are to be corrected, the better way is to proceed at once to the source whence they spring. We all know by experience how difficult it is to correct bad habits; perhaps the difficulty would be lessened, if instead of attempting to cure the manifestation of the evil, we were to descend into our hearts, see whence it arises, and subdue the disposition there. The best method of correcting our inconsistencies is to become better acquainted with our own hearts, whence all our conduct is derived. If it is with the conduct of others we have to do, whether to judge or to correct, the success of our endeavours, and the justness of our judgment, mainly depend on looking beyond the apparent inconsistency to its cause, and ascribing it to its right source. Want of information, or a bad judgment, claim very unequal censure, as well as a very different remedy, from that which is due to dishonesty of purpose.

I know a young person to whom circumstances have given considerable control in her parents' house—she devotes time and talents to the management and education of her sisters, and says she has nothing so much at heart as their happiness and improvement. To effect this, she keeps the house in perpetual contention. She makes their wishes and tastes yield to every thing to hers: she finds fault with every thing they do; complains of every thing

that happens to interrupt her purposes, and condemns every thing that does not exactly meet her ideas. Reasonable or unreasonable, nothing must take place in the family that does not exactly suit her convenience, and what does suit her convenience must be done at any rate. One of two things is the case—either she is dishonest in her purpose, and while she seems to devote her time and attention to her family, she really desires nothing but the indulgence of her own self-will; or she wants judgment to perceive, that always giving herself the preference is not the way to make others good and happy; and that the devotion of all her time, talents, and powers, to the annoying, contradicting, and molesting every one about her, is not a very consistent sort of sisterly devotion. If I were not indisposed to say any thing to any body above twenty years of age, I might just drop a hint that there are some devoted wives, and devoted mothers, and devoted mistresses, who do exactly the same thing. Did this traveller never mean to go to Greenwich? Or, on arriving at the way-post, and reading “To London,” did she conclude that that would bring her there?

I know another who seems very anxious to be sought and beloved by her companions in society; complains perpetually that nobody cares for her, and every body neglects her, and she receives no attention and no kindness from any one. Meantime, if she sees those people whose inattention displeases her, she goes across the street to avoid meeting them: when she comes into company, she sits in dogged and sullen silence; or only speaks to declare that she hates all company, and is never happy but when she is alone; or to say something rude or impertinent to the society in general, or to some one in particular: if any offer of kindness is made her, she

refuses it; if any particular attention is paid her, she attributes it to some sinister motive. Now, as I am satisfied from this lady's uneasiness, that she is honest in her wish to be beloved, she must either, like the last traveller, think the way to reach her destination is to turn out of the road, or she must be unable to read, and really believe that L-o-n-d-o-n spells Greenwich—that is, she must think the way to be desired and sought in society, is to be very disagreeable, or that d-i-s-l-i-k-e-d really spells beloved; and so, with honest ignorance, takes the way to it.

. A third I could point out, who desires, as I understand from herself, to improve her talents and inform her mind, that, when the transient beauty of her person shall have faded, and the zest of exterior amusement shall have passed away, she may not be to others as a thing that has lost its value; to herself as one that has expended her possessions. But with ample powers and all means at command, she stands for an hour together at the fire-place, watching the reflection of the lustres. She begins to yawn at nine o'clock, and goes to bed at ten; is up, but not dressed, about the same hour in the morning: takes half an hour to put on her bonnet when she goes out, and another half hour when she comes home to take it off again: regretting, the while, that she has not time to improve herself. When any one about her is conversing upon serious and rational topics, she throws herself on the sofa, and shuts her eyes, because she does not understand such things; forgetful that by listening she might learn. When asked her opinion, or in any way addressed upon any subject, she says she is not used to converse of such things, she is not used to express herself; forgetting again it is difficult to be used to a thing one is de-

terminated not to attempt. She chooses her companions among those who are young, frivolous, and ignorant, because with those who are informed and sensible, she feels herself inferior and embarrassed. In her studies and pursuits, especially reading, she does the same. She takes the lightest, the most frivolous, and the worst, because she cannot understand more solid works : she wishes she could understand them, then she should be very fond of reading. Now, really I am at a loss how to class the inconsistency of this young lady. I am inclined to think she is not honest in her purpose : I believe, that in her heart, she would rather be idle and frivolous, than a sensible, rational, and cultivated woman.

To ascend to higher matters, which yet affect our conduct in the smallest, there is one great source of inconsistency in the world, of which the features are too broad to be mistaken ; of which the compass is wide enough to include every age, and character, and capability of human kind—the inconsistency of those who call themselves Christians and are not : who are travelling where they do not seem to desire to arrive : who are going as they say, to immortality, but neither know the road nor ask it, nor will listen if you tell them of it : nay, there is not an obstacle that may oppose their progress, but they put it in their path ; there is not a temptation that may divert them from it, but they hasten to turn after it. Whatever reminds them of their pretended destination is mournful to them, whatever brings them nearer to it, is frightful. They allow the truth of every thing, and feel the importance of nothing. They admit the authority of Scripture, and deny every thing it contains. They call God their Father, and would be ashamed to bear the characters of his children : they acknowledge a Deity and an eter

nity, and live as if there were none. I need not designate them further. What consistency can be expected from such as these?

If, then, we would be consistent, we must first see that our object and our means of pursuing it, our path and our destination, are agreed. If they are not, let us examine where the evil is. Do we want information, do we want judgment, or do we want honesty? One or the other we want assuredly.

There is a character consistent in beauty, in holiness, in perfection. The features of it have been sketched, distinct though separate, in the records of eternal truth: the whole have been conjoined, embodied, realized, in the person of the incarnate Deity. Conformity to this standard is perfection: every departure from it, is an imperfection. Here perfect consistency would be perfect holiness. It is a standard no man has attained; yet is it the only one consistency which is desirable. When we seek consistency for ourselves, this ought to be what we mean; when we desire consistency in others, this ought to be the rule by which we judge them. But, I fear, for the most part, that is not our meaning. The only lawful code of conformity is abrogated; the only real standard of excellence, consistency with which is beautiful, and every inconsistency with which is a defect, is put out of sight; while we make to ourselves each one a standard of our own, moulded on our own prejudices, our own habits, our own peculiar taste and character; and by this we measure every thing, judge every thing, and too frequently condemn every body, for no better reason than because they are not like ourselves. In great things, and in small things, from the important features of moral rectitude, to the trifling ornaments of exterior propriety, Self is our standard, and all is

right or wrong, admired or condemned, as it agrees with, or departs from, this standard, this household deity, that each one has made for himself, and fashioned to his own taste, that he may worship it. **CONSISTENCY**, therefore, has come, in common language, to mean little else than conformity to the narrow ideas of the individual who uses it.

SCHOOL EDUCATION.

If we can succeed in showing the mother that she has left a duty unperformed towards her infant—a duty of paramount importance—yea, one of far greater consequence than those, even, which she so assiduously performs for its bodily comfort; if we can convince her that any of the bad passions which agitate, the evil dispositions which deform, and the vicious inclinations which degrade the human character, are under her control; are attributable to her neglect; and may be prevented by her exertions; she will no longer be idle, she will no longer be negligent and indifferent as to the moral health of her offspring.

As soon as a group of little creatures peep out from the nursery, every body asks the mother how she means to educate them? and she, with maternal anxiety, begins to inquire for the best method. For some it is determined that they shall have governesses, some are to be sent to school, some are to be taught by masters, and some are to get their education piecemeal, and by accident, in any way that may happen; which, I have been surprised to observe, sometimes proves, in the end, a very good one. As to which of these modes of education is the best, volumes large, and volumes many, have been written; and our most partial readers would not, I believe, petition for another, even of six pages, were there not a point in view in which the subject is not, to my knowledge, sufficiently considered. There is yet room for discussion on the subject, “How should a *Christian* mother educate her children?” for it cannot be that the same answer should be

given where that adjective is subjoined, and where it is omitted. It cannot be, that to ends so opposite, the same path should be the most direct. When a boy is to be brought up to the church, he is not sent to a military school; neither, when destined to the army, is he sent to a theological seminary. If, therefore, there be two masters, two services, two worlds, so distinct and separate as the Scriptures throughout describe them, there must be some difference in the mode of preparation for them. The boy educated for the army may, when he becomes a man, choose to go into the church; and the man educated for the church may take it into his head to enter the army; but this is not in the parents' contemplation; they have an object, and pursue the most likely means to attain it. The child of the Christian mother may turn out careless, thoughtless, unbelieving, and choose the service for which she was not designed; for genuine piety goes not by inheritance, nor of the bequest of man; but the Christian mother does not intend this, does not prepare for this bad preference. And if at the baptismal font she have really devoted her child to be a child of God and a servant of Christ, with ardent prayer and honest wish that the vow should be fulfilled, it is impossible her view of education, and the manner in which she calculates the advantages of the various modes of it, can be exactly the same, as if she considers that ceremony an established farce, and would be very sorry that her child should fulfil its promises. If, therefore, I write my sentiments upon the best mode of educating girls, it is for *Christian* mothers; to them only, my observations apply: for I am satisfied they cannot, in every point at least, be equally applicable to all.

Travelling last autumn, leisurely and for amuse-

ment, in the West of England, by one of those casualties that so often give beginning to the most intimate and lasting friendship, I became acquainted with a gentleman travelling the same road, though not on the same errand. I was wandering away from my home, he was making haste to return to his. After much of that preluding sort of intercourse which usually makes the first chapter of a story so uninteresting, I received an invitation to make his house one stage upon my journey, and remain a few days there, to see what was worthy of observation in the neighbourhood. I did so: and whatever I did or did not see without, I was most highly satisfied with all I found within. I scarcely need draw a picture, of which the original may be seen in every town or province of our happy country—the picture of domestic enjoyment, and grateful prosperity. By prosperity, I do not mean wealth revelling in her halls of luxury, amid the plenitude of unrestrained expenditure; but that secure sufficiency, which speculating avarice does not reach, and ostentatious splendour does not waste; which hundreds do enjoy, and hundreds might who do not, were their desires more reasonable, and their hearts more grateful.

If there was nothing in the residence of my friend that bespoke unlimited resources, nothing splendid or costly, it is impossible to imagine a comfort that was not to be found there. Though not far from a large town, the extensive shrubbery that encompassed the house, and closed it from the road, gave to it a fictitious air of loneliness and seclusion, the more delightful, perhaps, that it was not a reality. My friend was a grave and sensible man; one in whose company you could not pass an hour, without perceiving a mind of no common cultivation, under the immediate and habitual influence of the strong-

eat religious principles. His lady was cheerful, rational, it seemed to me accomplished and well-read, with remarkable kindness and simplicity of manners. Their days were spent in that sort of busy leisure, in which no one being actually compelled to do any thing, has yet, in the sense of duty, a stronger impulse to activity than any necessity could supply. When the morning bell rang for prayers, about half-a-dozen servants made their appearance, with cheerful faces, and received, in few words, the kindly instructions of their master. The breakfast hour passed in rational discourse, or the discussion of family matters; my friend went either to his study, or to some business in the town or in the country, that took up great part of his morning: the lady was occupied, as most *not idle* ladies are, with a great many different things—books, work, household affairs, the calls of friendship, and the claims of benevolence.

At dinner, in the afternoon, and in the evening, whether it was in the society of a few cultivated and agreeable friends, or in the perusal of popular works, or the chat about men and things—I do not mean scandal—time passed with equal and untroubled wings, till the day's work ended as it began, in the assembling of the family to prayers; as if to forget all distinctions where all are equal, and lose, in contemplation for eternity, the factitious differences of time and circumstance. Peace, holiness, and love, had their dwelling there; nor dwelt there only for the comfort of the family themselves. There the ignorant had instruction and advice, the hungry had food, and the naked clothing. At a certain hour of the week-day, I saw the lady go out to visit establishments of charity, that needed, as she told me, the personal attention of those who supported them, as persons who were employed and paid for

the purpose did not always do their duty or understand it. At a certain hour on the Sunday, I saw a number of half-grown girls assembled in her hall, to be instructed by herself. In conversation with her husband, I heard her speak of Mary Thompson, and Elizabeth Wilson, and James Butler, as if she knew all the children's names, characters and propensities, and was making it her business to watch over their welfare day by day, checking the growth of ill, and encouraging every promise of good.

The gentleman took me to the week-day schools he had established, where I observed, that he called every child by its name, and spoke to it in a manner that implied a personal knowledge of its temper and condition. He sometimes talked apart with the teachers, with an earnestness that proved he did not think it enough to hire and to pay, without knowing how the duty was performed. I do not wish to write a story—imagine all the rest. Consider, for you know, how many well-beneficed clergy, many professional or independent gentlemen, many wealthy retired tradesmen, live and pass their time, and scatter blessings around them. For my part, I envied the very servants in the house: for they, even to the stable-boy, seemed objects of kindness and parental care; as if their employers held themselves responsible for their present comfort and their eternal welfare, so far as by human means either could be promoted.

It was the third evening of my visit, that, sitting with my friends alone, intent on the growth of the just lighted fire, whose gay crackling made one rejoice that the chill of an autumn evening had afforded excuse for lighting it, I remarked on what I had seen, and added—a sort of compliment that needed no sacrifice of truth—that the neighbouring

poor were favoured by Providence, in that, having no children of their own, it had disposed their hearts to become the parents of all around them. The lady smiled, and asked why I thought they had no children? Certainly I had no reason to think so, except the want of a reason to think otherwise; and not immediately replying, she added, "Our two girls have gone to school for some years in London, and our boy is at Eton." I had started a fruitful theme—a mother's tongue will rarely wear it out. She spoke of her girls' affections; of the tears they shed at parting; of her longing anticipation of their return. Once I interrupted her, to ask why she parted from them? "It was for their good; for the advantage of better masters; that they might mix with other girls; that they might not be without the advantages others have, whose parents live more in the world. She could not be so selfish as to deprive them of these, for the sake of sparing herself this painful separation."

I am more disposed to listen than to talk: but it passed over my mind, that had I a child, to have it brought up in such a house as this, I would pay double what they paid to send theirs out of it. I had not heard there a single word I should not wish my child to hear: I had not seen a thing I should not desire her to imitate: I had not even missed a thing I should be careful for her to acquire; and the company I had met there were such as I should desire her to form connexion with. For what advantages were these children gone abroad? I asked to whom they had committed so important a charge? My friend replied, that it had cost him much anxious care to determine where to send them; he had inquired widely, and chosen the school that seemed, from all he heard, the most desirable. In the *single*

interview he had with the lady, he was much satisfied with her conversation, and her account of herself. I asked permission to visit the girls on my return to London, and receive them at my house. It was granted gladly; the father assuring me that to know them to be under the observation of a friend he could rely on, would be a great satisfaction, while he was too far off to watch them himself. Why did a parent choose to be so far off?

I returned to town, and repaired with my letters of credit to the school. I was shown into a room, very neat, very clean, very cold. The chairs stood with their backs to the walls: they looked as if they were made to stand there: the sofa looked as if it was made to wear its handsome covering; the bright bars of the grate, filled with cut paper, seemed determined on perpetual summer: the carpet beamed in vernal freshness, as if few were the footsteps privileged to tread it. Over the chimney hung a large bunch of flowers, beautifully painted; but like no flowers that ever grew, unless it might be in Eden. By the side of them hung a crayon head, beautifully executed also, could the head and the hair have agreed upon the angle of inclination that became them. The lady of the house appeared, and received me with much politeness. She was well dressed, and for any thing I could exactly specify to the contrary, well-bred. Yet I know not how it was, the first thing that came to my mind on seeing her, was the refined, elegant, sensible mother I had parted from: it was not from the resemblance certainly. She had one of those faces which the inexperienced call good-natured; because they are round, fresh, and lively; a physiognomist does not say so. She talked much and sensibly, and very religiously—that sort of way in which people talk, whose right to be called reli-

gious, has never been questioned by others, nor for a moment doubted by themselves. She passed high encomiums on her pupils, their talents and behaviour; but wished they could forget their parents and their home: it would be better if their mother did not write so often. She then praised their previous education, and wished all her pupils were religiously brought up. Some girls came there with such habits and ideas collected at home, it was scarcely possible to prevent their doing mischief to others, or to make them conform even exteriorly to the principles on which she educated her pupils; their parents, too, were so suspicious of religion, she was obliged to allow many things she did not approve; and that even for the children's sake, who might else be removed, and placed where they could learn no good at all. This was true—but it reminded me of once opening a green-house window to cool some plants that would not bear the heat, by which I killed all those that had been used to it.

The pupils followed—tall, delicate girls of twelve and fifteen years. The governess did not leave them with me. What, I thought, can the father's friend say to the father's child, that needs be listened to? I gave them their mother's letter—they presented it to their governess to read. What, I thought again, can a mother write to her own child, that a stranger presumes to scrutinize? When I talked of their home, I remarked that a tear came to the eye of the elder, while an arch smile played on the face of the younger. The governess remarked it, and commending the latter, gave a gentle reproof to the other. I remembered what that home was, and claimed most fellowship with the feelings of the elder.

The girls came often to my house; and it being

perceived that I was confided in by the parents, I was even once or twice allowed to look in upon them at their studies. The governess, in truth, had no cause to fear inspection. Though of a rugged temper, and feelings sufficiently obtuse, she conscientiously fulfilled the duties she had engaged for. She was not the mother of her pupils—she was not pledged to be—but she was their instructress, just, careful, clever. She did not love them—how could she love a dozen fresh comers every year, whom, at the end of it, she might never see again? But she treated them kindly, and was anxious for their improvement. She did not know their characters—how could she, when she never saw them freed from the form her presence imposed? But she managed them upon some broad principle, and instructed them upon some mechanical system, that no doubt, suited all tempers and capacities. In short, there was nothing to blame: and when I compared the unfurnished rooms, and uncomfortable meals, the harsh orders and captious replies, the slovenly dress, and not over-cleanly habits; the restraint before the governess, the rudeness in her absence, the rivalry, bitterness, jealousy, and impertinence, that ever will prevail where twenty persons, young or old, are compelled, without their choice, to dwell together in perpetual competition, without the softening influence of natural affection, early habit, and united interest; when I compared all this with the elegance, the indulgence, the peace, the love, that pervaded the home of these girls, doubtless the fault was mine, that I did not immediately perceive the advantages to be derived from such a change.

Talking with the girls in private, expressly for the purpose, I found how differently each one was affected by the change according to her different

character. The elder's heart was all at home. Did she like music, drawing, reading? She used to like it when she was at home, but she did not now. Did she like her school-fellows? No—one was ill-natured, another proud, another stupid. Mistrust, suspicion, dislike, feelings she could never in her home have known, were evidently among the lessons she had here learned. She should wish never to know any one when she left school but her papa and mamma. The younger wanted to go home, of course—but she should not like to live always in the country. It would be so mopy to have no companions, and see nothing of the world. Miss P. had asked her to a young ladies' ball; she wished I would ask her mamma to let her go—there could be no harm in going once to see what it was like. Did I think her mamma would let her have a pelisse like Miss B.'s?—the things they had in the country looked so old-fashioned in town! Her governess would not let her go home with Miss F., because they were what she called worldly people; but, for her part, she thought them a great deal more good-natured and pleasant than herself, who was always talking about religion. I was to be sure to tell her mamma that she liked French now, because she had got above a whole class of ill-natured girls, who used to laugh at her when she came to school; now she could pay them back again. While the one talked only of her discomforts, her wrongs, her dislikes, in a tone of discontent and ill-humour I could not but blame extremely, the other talked of her triumphs, her discoveries, and her new-waked desires, in a way that satisfied me she had learned too much. I doubted if either would be as happy when she went back, as she was before she came. Questioning them about the religious instructions and practices

of the school, they said their governess took a great deal of pains about it, read plenty of prayers and plenty of sermons, and gave them very good things to learn. But it took up a great deal of their time, and was very tiresome, and most of the girls made a joke of it. The elder had found out there was no real religion but in her father's house—the younger had found out it was much better to keep one's religion to oneself, and not make a fuss about it. With respect to the manners of my young friends, which they had more especially come hither to improve, the one was indifferent, inattentive, and lounging, almost to rudeness: the other was pert, confident, and fantastical; neither bore the smallest resemblance to the elegant simplicity of their mother.

I have told my story. Are all schools alike? Is a school education the only good or the only bad one? *Must* Christian mothers send their girls away from them? Are children better any where than in the best of homes? Was the personal inspection bestowed on Elizabeth Wilson and Mary Thompson not due to their own children?

MATERNAL EDUCATION.

Cornelia, taking upon her the care of her family, and the education of her children, distinguished herself by her modesty, magnanimity, and maternal affection. Her two sons she brought up with such care, that though they were, without dispute, of the noblest family, and had the best natural dispositions of any of the Romans, yet they seemed to owe their eminent virtues more to their education than to their birth.

PLUTARCH.

IN returning with some seriousness to the subject of my last chapter, I must gain offer as the reason, that it is a deeply important subject; and though I suppose not that any tale a Listener can tell, or any counsel a writer can offer, will decide the purpose of a mother in the manner of her child's education; they may awaken reflections and feelings in her bosom, that will materially affect her decisions. That all schools are not alike, I will take for granted. There are all the gradations from worst to best that are in other things. Whether a school education is the worst of all possible plans, I will leave to be decided by the wise, when I have related what befell in one of my listening excursions.

I came, no matter how, into a house of strangers. The family were of something higher rank and larger fortune than the one before described. Elegance and fashion, combined, as in modern times they are, with every imaginable comfort and convenience, were the prevailing character of the establishment;

and wealth and rank were adorned in it with much that is beautiful; in a worldly point of view, I may say, I saw nothing otherwise. Mr. B. was engaged all day in an office of public trust, but not exclusively of the claims of humanity; for he was the first in liberality, and the first in activity, wherever good was to be done. Mrs. B. was certainly not much at home, and when at home was much engaged in company; yet I saw her very attentive to such domestic duties as became her station, and even more than sometimes belongs to it. I heard her household orders given with great exactness and regularity. I accompanied her to the dressmaker's, and the shoemaker's, and various other makers, to provide what was necessary for her family, especially for her children, who seemed to be always first in her thoughts on these occasions. I saw her often employed in preparing comforts for the poor, and entering int minute details of charitable exertion. Altogether she was a very elegant, refined, and amiable woman. Half her day was passed as above described, the other half in paying or receiving visits—the evening and half the night in company abroad or company at home, and the remainder, I suppose, in sleep.

I was not ignorant of the existence of children in this house; for besides the frequent mention of them by the mother, I saw at least a dozen pour into the room after dinner, dressed very elegantly, to be flattered, admired, and crammed; but was much concerned to know where they existed during the intervals of this periodical swarming. Mrs. B. was quite willing to satisfy my curiosity. She had built a nursery and a school-room in a distant part of the house, that the children might not be disturbed by the late hours of the family: she had nurses in one, and governesses in the other; the best that could be

procured ; that is to say, the dearest that could be purchased. When I asked why she saw so little of her children, she said it was a sacrifice she must necessarily make for their good. When she was at home after breakfast, they were at their studies ; when she would like to take them out with her, they were at their dinner ; and when her evening commenced they were going to bed. She seldom went into the school-room, because the governess did not like to be interfered with. She was very anxious they should be morally and religiously educated, and thought it was much better they should see no company, and not be much seen, till they were of an age to be introduced.

With little difficulty I obtained permission to frequent the nursery and school-room, where the education of the family was performed and perfected, with all the secrecy of the Inquisition. A French nurse, with a strong provincial accent, was kept in the former, that, as soon as the babes could speak, they might talk French, or something as near to it as the dialect of Somersetshire is to English. That the nurse was cramming their infant minds with the idle legends and vulgar superstitions of her catholicism, was a matter of no consideration. Hear the little creatures enjoyed for seven years the full swing of their native dispositions ; except where they happened to interfere with the native dispositions of their nurses, who, next to themselves, agreed to indulge the children : coaxed, humoured, flattered, when they were wrong ; reproved, checked, and scolded, when they were right ; and most carefully instructed to tell no tales out of the nursery of what passed in it. Children early know their interest ; the happiness of these depended on their nurses, not on their parents : there was little disposition, had

there been an opportunity, to disclose what they heard or saw, at the risk of offending the nurse. What they did see and hear, those mothers who leave their children to the care of servants and the company of servants' companions, but little know. At seven years old, these scions underwent transplantation, and were received to the mysteries of the school-room.

Mrs. B. had procured her governess as other ladies sometimes do. That is, when she wanted one, she drove to her bookseller's, and asked him if he knew of one? he gave her the address of a dozen, whom he did not know: she appointed an interview, and saw them once for half an hour; asked them if they knew every thing, to which they answered, "Yes;" if they gave attention to religious and moral instruction, which they did of course; if they belonged to the church of England, which, for any thing they knew to the contrary, they did also: and, finally, chose the one that asked the highest price; had lived with people of the highest rank, and said "Yes," with the most unshrinking confidence. To this lady, with no further examination than a polite note to her last employer, politely answered in affirmatives to every thing, the children were committed for the next ten years. The most unlimited monarchy existing in this society—subject to no laws but those she made for herself, and broke at her pleasure; no superintendence, no resistance, no appeal—legislative, executive, judicative, all in one. The lady who held the appointment during my visit, was not more than five-and-twenty: she had passed her youth in a fashionable boarding-school, the few first years of her womanhood in the idleness of genteel life, and at twenty had been left unexpectedly to poverty and her own resources. Patronage had

put her forward in a task she hated, but could not escape from : five years' experience had taught her how to perform it with the least possible inconvenience to herself, and the greatest possible satisfaction to her careless or ignorant employers. Her bosom seared by her isolated condition, and soured by her fate, gave into the melancholy narrowness of her sphere : it could only open itself in degrading gossip with the servants about family affairs, or imprudent gossip with the children about that world from which they were so anxiously excluded—its follies, its passions, its excitements, even its vices—all those secrets they were shut up here, that they might not too early learn. This, however, was the evening's indulgence, or the Sunday's treat—from six in the morning to six at night, the girls were kept to work—lesson after lesson, master after master, filled the six days entire. One hour, and not always that, if the governess happened to have a letter to write at home, these caged birds might breathe the air of heaven : that is, they might lag arm in arm, speechless, and all but motionless, round and round the square in London, or the garden in the country. How the lessons were done, nobody knew, and nobody cared. Not the governess, she hated the task, and only cared it should be over ; not the children, for no valued approbation waited their success ; not the mother, for she never interfered. A few things, indeed, it was essential to advance in : their manner, their carriage, might be observed after dinner ; they might possibly be desired to play. All this was prepared for. They had ample instructions what to do, and what to say, whatever should be asked of them. The nursery lesson was re-learned in the school-room.

It little affected their comfort whether their mo

ther was pleased, but every thing depended on pleasing their governess: from interest and habit, they heard and confirmed the flattering reports made, and the interested deceptions used, in the few short interviews that took place between the mother and the governess, without any disposition to contradict them. They did not love their governess, for she was selfish and indifferent; they did not fear her, for she had too little dignity and consistency to impose respect; but it was their interest to keep her in good humour; their sole companion, guide, and confidant. Their minds took necessarily the measurement of hers: their opinions her conceits; their principles her duplicity; their knowledge her assumption; their dispositions her plausibility. It might be a little better or a little worse, or a little different without being better or worse, as the governess was changed; but whether worse or better, the careless parent never knew: she paid the salary, and was content. This must be allowed a worse education than any decent school would have offered. There, at least, the eye of scrutiny can reach—there, twice at least in the twelve months, tongues are free to tell their tale; there the mind has space to expand itself, and the intellect to measure itself, and passions to punish themselves, in the collision of disunited interests; and there, at least, experience and capability hold the reins of government. I should decide it clearly preferable—as much preferable as the King's Bench to the Bastile.

Putting away all comparison, and the deprecation of any one system of education in particular, which was not my object, I pass on to the question—*Must* parents, Christian parents, put the education of their children entirely out of their own hands? Ought

they to do it? Women of the world, women of fashion, I am aware, cannot do otherwise. Their children must get up when *they* go to bed. While they are abroad, or engaged with company at home, which is all the time they are up, somebody must have the management of their children. Their hours, their habits, their duties, if such they are, and the subjects which engross their thoughts and attention, totally disable them from taking any part in their children's education, and the best they can do, is carefully to appoint another to their abdicated maternity. And in this case, the object being what it is, perhaps the education ordinarily so attained, is not inadequate to the purpose. They are preparing for the world's service. If in the highest rank of life, an advantageous marriage is avowedly the object; the purchase of their beauty, their name, their dower, or their external accomplishments. A step lower, this may be the object still, but not an avowed one to themselves; and happiness is allowed to stand by the side of wealth and name, in the reckoning of futurity. As you descend in the scale, this object loses its supremacy, and the parents educate their children for their actual, rather than their speculative, condition in the world. But still it is for the world, and the world exclusively. Of this same world, the governess may know more than the parent; she may be more apt at modern tactics; she may be fully competent to make her pupils feel ashamed of their father's manners, and their father's friends; and through many a mortification, and many an unchristian feeling, help them to place themselves eventually a step or two above it. In all these alike, to keep their station in the world, or to improve it, is the primary, I may say, the only object: and we leave it willingly

to the more able and experienced to decide, by what mode of education it may be best attained.

But with the exception of some few particular cases, I confess I see not why *Christian* mothers put from their hands the first duty of their existence : and without a necessity, I cannot perceive how it can be excusable. Its incompatibility with other duties is the usual plea. But what are these superseding claims upon a mother's time and care ? In the whole round of matronly occupation, I can admit but one—the claims of her husband ; and this is often pleaded. So far as these claims really do interfere, I would admit the full priority of this. Were it to our point, I could say much more upon the miscalculation of those ladies who withdraw themselves from the society of their husband, and put his house in perpetual discomfort and confusion, for the sake of what they are pleased to call devotion to their children ; but I have generally observed, that it is the part of the nursery-maid, not of the governess, these ladies perform in preference to the duties of a wife. So far as they interfere, the latter should surely take precedence ; but there are few gentlemen so unreasonable as to require their wife's society always, to be always at home ; and if they are principally so, it becomes their duty, and being Christians, as we are throughout supposing, is most likely to become their pleasure, to take an interest in their children's education also. It is not a mother's whole time that needs to be thus occupied : she is mistaken, if she supposes it occupies the whole time of those to whom she commits it in her stead. At school, the mistress sees her pupils a few hours in the day ; in the private school-room, the governess is personally indeed imprisoned, but her thoughts, her feelings, and her time, have widely

scattered objects. Neither, when a mother takes the direction of her children's education, is it by any means implied that she must have no assistance in the hours that her attention is necessarily withdrawn.

Domestic management is another excuse. I do not particularly pride myself on my powers of calculation, but certainly I never could understand the arithmetic of this sort of economy. The lady has the charge of her family, which takes up all her time: that is, she has to order the dinner, provide the dress, direct the servants, economize the revenue. Perhaps she has to make the frocks, and stitch the wristbands, and various other little matters ladies are accustomed to do. I might be charged with inexperience were I to affirm that these may be done too; but of this I am certain—a housekeeper may be hired for twenty guineas,* and a needle-woman may be hired for ten—but a good governess cannot be hired for a hundred, nor a good school be paid for for two hundred a-year. With respect to the superior importance of the one charge to the other, need a rational being—least of all, need a Christian—be taught it? Is the cutting of a frock or the shape of a bonnet of more importance than the formation of a child's mind and character; as some mothers practically declare it to be, by neglecting the one, because they have to attend to the other? Christian ladies of the present day have discovered that neither their household cares, nor the claims of their husbands, nor the demands of society, nor all united, are sufficient to occupy their whole time. Witness the schools of charity, the institutions of benevolence, and the committee-rooms of societies. Have we no

* About ninety-three dollars.

married women here ? And, if we have, where are their children ? Fifty miles off, taking their chance in a fashionable school ; at home, left to the entire management of a stranger, uninterested and incompetent to the formation of their character, whatever she may be to their mere tuition. Far be it from me to express disapprobation of the above exertions ; but I must think the moral, and religious, and rational education of our own children a prior duty. If it can be done for hire, hire somebody to go to the school of charity ; if orders will supply the place of personal interference, send a deputy to the cottage of poverty. We know they cannot ; and we act on the persuasion in every thing, but in the first great duty of maternal responsibility.

The last remaining excuse we hear women plead, is incapacity. There may be cases—but excepting that of sickness, we confess we know not where to look for them—in which a Christian mother is incapable of educating her own children, with such assistance as she might procure without giving the entire superintendence and management out of her own hands. What should she desire for her children that she has not ? A few accomplishments ? They may be easily purchased, if she can afford it—if not, they may be done without. A little more of solid, useful knowledge ? *That* she may acquire, if it is necessary, or put them in a way to acquire it for themselves ; or that also she may pay somebody else to teach them. She does not understand teaching, and knows not so well how to manage children, as those whose business it is. This she too might not know. And to what sort of persons does she defer her fancied inexperience ? To young women for the most part less educated than herself ; as little used, and far more unwilling, to the task ; who come to it to

earn an uncomfortable subsistence, with little interest in it while doing, and little gain from it when done : strangers to the children, their dispositions, and their prospects ; neglecting, mistaking, often opposing, the parents' views and aims ; or, if yielding to them, embarrassed by their inconsistency with her own. And this is equally true whether the child be educated at home or abroad. Mothers complain that governesses are so little interested in their charge, enter so little into the parent's feelings, perform so like hirelings their task. Are not these complaints unreasonable ? What is the wonder, that a stranger should little like the charge a mother shows no liking for ?—should do distastefully what a mother shuns entirely ? What should she be made of, that her heart and soul should be devoted to children whom she must part from, and probably never see again, or see them in a sphere she cannot approach ; while she whose first and deep interest it is, now and for ever, prefers to occupy herself with any thing besides ? It is vain to say the governess is brought up to it—it is her business : the former for the most part is not true, the latter is her misfortune. She may be a very useful assistant to the mother, but she never, a few peculiar cases excepted, can assume her duties, or affect her cares : though she may, and often does, most conscientiously fulfil her own : that is, she does what she engaged to do ; the best a stranger can do for a stranger's children.*

* Parents will be held accountable for the education of their children, and they are bound to bring them up in the fear, and for the service of God ; and upon the kind of instruction of their early years, much of their future happiness or misery will depend.

It is a most melancholy truth, that even among Christian

I feel there is more behind than all these pleas. There must be something more than this that would induce the pious mother, whose heart beats in holy solicitude over the spiritual welfare of every peasant's child, to send from her own hands, from her own care, the child of her affections; to make over to another the fond claims of gratitude and affection due to the instructors of our childhood; to forego the sweetest, fondest task maternity can know; rearing, forming, maturing its own work, and watching the growth, and gathering, in holy gratitude, the produce of its labours. We fear that parents have not made up their minds for which world their chil-

parents, there are many who permit the early habits and characters of their children to be formed by ignorant, superstitious, and wicked servants or teachers. But it is also a truth, that the remarks of the "Listener" are not applicable to a large and increasing class of talented, devoted, and pious teachers, who may be found in many of the cities and villages in the United States. The importance of training the infant mind is gaining more attention, and the business of instruction is about to occupy a much higher place. Infant schools are forming to embrace children in the higher circles of life. Teachers of liberal education, of enlarged views, who love the employment, are devoting their time and talents to the cause: and there are many who can secure the attention, and gain the affection, and communicate knowledge, and adopt their instruction better to the capacities of children, than the generality of parents—teachers who have made it their study to impart instruction in the most easy, natural, and endearing manner, and who can convey knowledge in the way of amusement. There are many conscientious teachers of seminaries for youth, of higher attainments too, who are not ashamed or afraid to make religious instruction a prominent feature in their system; and who endeavour not only to fit the youth of their care for usefulness in this life, but for happiness and glory in the next. But the misfortune is, most parents are satisfied with showy and worldly accomplishments, and while they are anxious to provide these for their children, they too often neglect their immortal souls.

dren are to be reared, and are determined they shall be made fit for either. Should Mammon hereafter claim them, their breeding shall not disgrace his service: whereas, should the parents' God be pleased hereafter to claim the child, his grace will supply what is wanting and subdue what is amiss. O shame upon the monstrous calculation, founded on the proud exactions of the one master, and the forbearing pity of the other! It has been remarked that the children of religious parents turn out worse than others. If they do, this is the cause. The worldly parent is honest in his purpose, and succeeds in it. The Christian parent is not honest; he will run any risks, make any compromise, rather than forego for his children one of the factitious advantages enjoyed by the children of the world. He says—his conduct says—it is as much an object of desire to him that his children should rise in the world, shine in society, distinguish themselves in earthly pursuits, and form high connexions, as it is to others. If it is, our religion is as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; and the sooner we give over to fret the ears of men with it the better.

If the advantages of earth bear exactly the same relative importance that they did before, we may have changed our creed, but our hearts are the same: we had better shake hands again with the world, and ask pardon for the divisions we have occasioned. We have talked of higher destinies and superior aims; and for ourselves we seem, from satiety and weariness it may be, to have altered the objects of pursuit and the estimate of good: but begin the game again for our children; and behold, it is no other than it was before. They must play for the same stake, and use the same means to win it, and set as high a value on it, and be taught to

play for it at as high a cost, as if we did not profess to have discovered that it is not worth the having. And for its sake we must submit to place in jeopardy that rich inheritance which it is not ours indeed to secure them—nor the other either—but it is ours to use the means for one or for the other, according as our wishes are ; and as our wishes are, our endeavours most surely will be, however we may persuade ourselves eternify has our choice, while time has our cares. What portion the Disposer of all things will bestow, his wisdom and mercy must determine. His promises to parental care are great and many. They scarcely seem to have been fulfilled. Have those parental cares been honest ones ? Have not the father, and the mother, for the sake of some fancied external advantage, exposed their children to contamination ? For a name of fashion, have they not compromised their own principles ? For fear the world should reject them, have they not provoked their rejection from above ?

I would be the last to neglect or undervalue any reasonable attention to external charms in education, still less any rational cultivation of the mind. We know that the world that now is, as well as that which is to come, is the Christian's inheritance : beauty, elegance, accomplishments, are the gifts of God, and therefore to be valued. But to all its season, and to all its place : and we must believe that the road to fashion and distinction in the world, is not the road to Christian simplicity and truth ; nor the same education promotative of both. Parents intend to secure to their children a double advantage ; but ill, for the most part, fares the undertaking. The children of fashion disown them, because they will not go all lengths in their career ; the religious mistrust them, because they wear another's

livery. They are not happy with the world, because they have the truths and feelings of religion in their hearts; they are not happy out of it, because it is there they are to exhibit and succeed. Brought up entirely for the world, they had been happy in it while it lasted, for their minds had been suited to their pursuits. Brought up entirely for religion, they had been happy out of it, for they had never known what its attractions are. But now the thorns are scattered on either path—of desire on the one, of compunction on the other. And if the better part of their education eventually prevail, the other part may rivet a chain about their necks, that will make them go heavily, even to the gates of heaven.

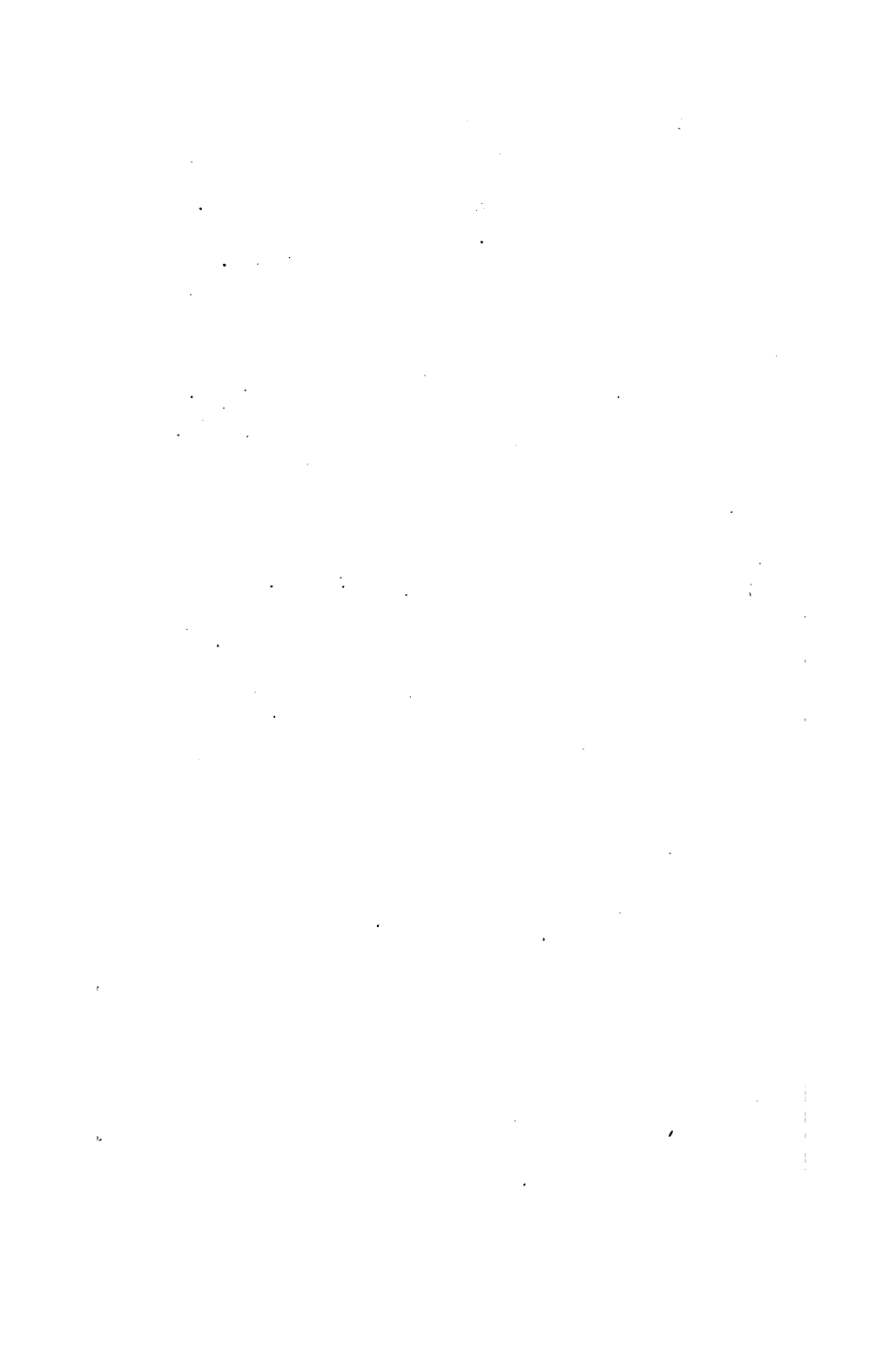
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